
THE COMET

Journal of the Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' League, Qld. Inc.

From COTA'S C. E. O. Mark Tucker-Evans

As you may have seen the Queensland Government has established a COVID-19 Seniors Taskforce led by Minister Kate Jones reporting directly to the Premier to launch and oversee a community awareness campaign about how to help our seniors with Communities Minister Coralee O'Rourke assisting in the regions and to coordinate a Care Army of professionals and volunteers to rally around Queensland's seniors.

A new telephone hotline is also being launched, to help ensure the wellbeing of older people during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Many seniors will of course be supported by family but others will need volunteers and community service organisations to help them stay home and stay safe and with things such as food or medicine drops.

Even something as simple as a daily telephone call can make a huge difference.

Older people, particularly those with pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease or a weakened immune system are most at risk of serious infection.

The government is today expanding the Community Recovery Hotline - a free call on 1800 173 349 - to link seniors and other vulnerable Queenslanders to essential services and support.

Queenslanders wanting to volunteer should also contact 1800 173 349. For more information: www.covid19.qld.gov.au/carearmy

COTA Queensland has been appointed to the COVID-19 Seniors Taskforce to ensure that the concerns and issues being experienced by Queensland's seniors are brought directly to the attention of the Taskforce which will meet weekly.

I am reaching out to you to ensure that we work collaboratively to advocate for the needs of one of Queensland's most vulnerable populations.

COTA is currently working from a virtual platform, i.e. my team are all working from their homes. We have successfully trialled this platform over the past few years so don't hesitate to contact me on my mobile 0411 389 946 or email mte@cotaqld.org.au

Our key message is that now is the time to Stay Connected yet respecting the need to remain physically distant.

Trust you are all well and responding to the challenges of this new world.

Best wishes

Mark Tucker-Evans

Chief Executive

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Services Directory

Commonwealth Government Directory

Administrative Appeals Tribunal	1300 366 700
Aust. Competition & Consumer Commission	1300 302 502
Australian Hearing	131 797
Aust. Securities & Investment Commission	07 3867 4700
Aust. Taxation Office	132 861
Centrelink (Older Australians line)	132 300
Child Support Agency	131 272
Commonwealth Respite and Life Flight Centre	1800 052 222
CRS (Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services) -	
Human Services	1800 277 227
Family Court of Australia	1300 352 000
Home & Community Care (65+ years)	1800 200 422
Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Comm.	1300 369 711
Immigration & Border Protection Department	131 881
Medicare	132 011
Migration Review Tribunal	1300 361 969
National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	
Legal Services	1800 012 255
Pharmaceutical Benefit's Scheme	1800 020 613
Private Health Insurance Complaints	1800 077 308
Private Health Insurance Ombudsman	1800 640 695
Translating & Interpreting Service	1300 655 820
Veteran's Affairs Department	133 254

Queensland State Government Directory

Anti-Discrimination Commission	1300 130 670
Department of Communities	137 468
Department of Energy & Water Supply	
Electricity & Gas	134 387
Water	137 468
Energy & Water Ombudsman	1800 662 837
Health Ombudsmen	133 646
Legal Aid Qld	1300 651 188
Office of Fair Trading	137 468
Public Guardian (Adults & Children)	1300 653 187
Public Trustee	1300 360 044
Qld Competition Authority	07 3222 0555
Qld Ombudsman's Office	1800 068 908
Residential Tenancies Authority	1300 366 311
Safe Food Queensland	1800 300 815
Senior's Advocacy Information	
& Legal Services (SAILS)	07 3214 6333
Senior's Card	13 74 68
Senior's Enquiry	1300 135 500
Senior's Legal & Support Service	
Brisbane	07 3214 6333
Cairns	07 4031 7179
Hervey Bay	07 4124 6863
Toowoomba	07 4616 9700
Townsville	07 4721 5511
State Emergency Service Office	13 74 68
Youth & Family Support Service	07 3274 9917

Community Support Services Service Directory **Domestic Violence Crisis Line 1800 811 811**

Immigrant Women's Support Service	07 3846 3490
	07 3255 1420
Qld Aged & Disability Advocacy	1800 818 338
Seniors & Go Card	13 74 68
Senior Shopper	1300 360 265
Sexual Assault Help Line	1800 811 811
South Brisbane Immigration & Community	
Legal Service	07 3846 3189
The Incapacitated Servicemen	
& Women's Assoc. of Aust	07 3356 9022
Women's legal Service	07 3392 0670
National Welfare Rights Network	1800 358 511

Department of Health Service Directory

Department of Health	1343 2584
Health Services Info Line	07 3837 5986
Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme	1300 443 570
My Aged Care	1800 200 422
Police link Queensland Police (non-urgent)	131 444
Crime Stoppers	1800 333 000

Advertisers



APRIL 2020

Front page. COTA MESSAGE

P2 Services Directory plus

P3 Editorial and Alex Gow advert

P4 Road Safety with Leyland

P5 Road safety cont.

P 6 Corona Virus

P7 " continued

P8 Branch Report

P9 RSPCA article

P10 Rules for Teachers

P 11 Adverts

P 12 Letter to Frank Gower & Vale

P 13 I met a man today

P 14 CODE OF CONDUCT

Contact APSL State Office to enquire about membership and a branch near you.

You can still contact Head Office on the usual number and Anneliese will answer.

**APSL—
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE!**



EDITORIAL

By

Cherith Weis



Dear Friends

I think as residents of this country we felt as though we'd been hit below the belt in the latter part of 2019 and were looking forward to great 2020. Horrific drought and losses; Horrendous bush fires throughout the country followed by beautiful rain.

2020? No 2020 Vision could have given us the foresight to warn us of what was coming. I am not going into what you should be doing during the length of this virus, there are those hints listed on pages in this edition.

What I would say is please take notice of the warn-

ings put out by our Health Ministers. Self Isolate; keep in touch with your friends; family and fellow APSL members. I wouldn't mind hearing what you are doing to occupy yourselves. Please send in your stories in the next edition by April 20.

So far, Australia is managing well and that is not because of what some non-conformists are calling "Draconian" measures, it's because our Government has recognized the huge problem on their hands and are asking us to comply.

We will get through this. We are known for our resilience. Probably we of the older generation remember what our parents went through during World War Two. We don't know hardship as they did. We have never had our essentials rationed as they had. By the grace of God, we will survive.

In some ways, it's done a lot to bring families together. Playing board games; Monopoly and so on, families engaging in some old fashioned fun.

I have heard of Dads inventing games - pretty serious stuff. One Dad wouldn't talk about it too much on Talk-back radio as he was thinking of copy-righting the new game. He's out of work but "using his head" during these stressful times.

I am not going to write about those people who are blatantly ignoring the "distance" laws and probably putting others in danger.

I am serious about knowing what you are doing. Send me in some of your stories about Self Isolating. Making too many trips to the fridge? Working out? Got any selfies?

If you feel like a chat, my new number is on Page 2. We are all only a phone call away.

Stay safe and well.

Cherith

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ROAD SAFETY

WITH

LEYLAND BARNETT

Collision Avoidance.

There has been a considerable amount of crashes happening in our region at the moment and I believe that it would be a great idea to do what we can, to avoid being involved in a collision.

In the Qld road rules book, "Keys to Drive" there is a section on Hazards as quoted "Approaching hazards

A hazard can be a physical feature or a situation such as an intersection, roundabout, or pedestrians or animals near a roadway."

"As a driver you should:

- recognise the hazard (scan continuously)
- know what action to take (system of vehicle control)
- act in time (give other drivers behind you ample warning).

System of vehicle control

Use the following system when approaching any traffic situation.

1. Identify the hazard (for example, an intersection or a pedestrian).
2. Ask, 'Is my position on the road correct for the hazard ahead?'
3. Mirrors and signals — check the rear vision mirrors to see where other vehicles are. If you need to indicate, do it now.

4. Approaching speed — check your speed is appropriate. Reduce or increase your speed as necessary.

5. Gears and mirrors — if you change speed, you may need to change gears.

Check the rear vision mirrors again to see what other vehicles are doing."

Factors that can control your ability to avoid a collision include: proper maintenance of your car; the tyre tread depth; condition of the road surface either wet or dry and your reaction time which is approximately 1.5 seconds for the human brain to activate the foot to engage the brake. Early observation of an incident and anticipation can be the key towards assisting you in reacting quickly and preventing a collision.

Every situation is different and some collisions cannot be avoided, please make sure you are wearing your seatbelt correctly to minimise serious injury to yourself.

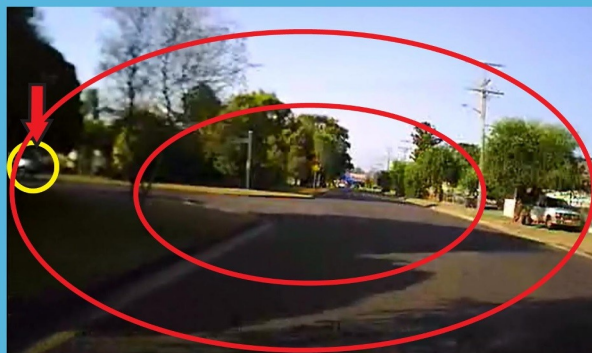
Drive safely by understanding how to identify a hazard and reacting quickly and appropriately to the situation you are facing.

Check out Leyland's website —

evolutiontraining.com.au

Continued from page 4

Early observation provides more reaction time and allows you to avoid an incident from occurring.



Dear APSL Members

Single

\$ 944.30

It will help our cause to obtain further signatures for our single pension petition if we could highlight the recent aged pension increase.

in the next issue of the Comet

Based on the aged pension before the 20th of March 2020 Pension adjustment the financial difference between the coupled pension and the single pension was. \$473.60.

Pension increases are based on the Consumer Price Index ,a system that has seen the single pension gap widen financially to the detriment of the single pensioner on almost every occasion .

The new March aged pension figurers and supplements are Coupled ..\$711.80, each totalling.....\$1423.60

A difference of

\$ 479.30

Prior to the last March adjustment the difference was \$473.60

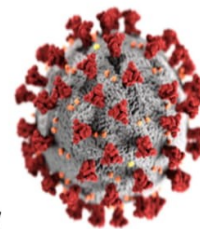
Under the new March adjustment the difference is \$479.30

It is very obvious to anyone that cares to look at the figurers the Single Pensioners are continually falling financially behind with every increase and this needs to be addressed by the Federal Government now.

Frank Gower

Caloundra Branch

CORONAVIRUS (Covid-19)



Information from Queensland Health

The COVID-19 novel coronavirus is a new strain of that can cause illness similar to the common cold. It can also cause more serious, severe respiratory illness.

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19 infection. Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections. However, most of the symptoms can be treated with medical care.

There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19 novel coronavirus.

<u>Signs and Symptoms:</u>	<u>Infection Control & Prevention:</u>
<p>Symptoms reported in identified cases of COVID-19 novel coronavirus include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fever • a cough • sore throat • fatigue • shortness of breath <p>Anyone who has travelled overseas in the past 14 days, and feels unwell, should see a doctor immediately. Before the appointment, please call ahead and advise of your symptoms and recent travel so they can prepare for your visit.</p> <p>People with suspected novel coronavirus will be tested.</p> <p>You might catch novel coronavirus (COVID-19) if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • someone with the virus sneezes or coughs onto you • someone with the virus coughed or sneezed onto a surface (like a door handle) that you touch, and you get the infected droplets on your hands and then transfer them to your mouth, nose or eyes when you touch your face or eat. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clean your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs. 2. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or bent elbow when coughing or sneezing. 3. Avoid touching your face, nose and mouth. And avoid shaking hands. 4. Stay home if you are unwell. 5. Avoid contact with anyone who is unwell – try to stay 1.5m away from anyone coughing or sneezing. <p>Look after yourself by eating a healthy, balanced diet, getting regular physical activity, sleeping well and reducing stress is important all the time.</p> <p>Face-masks Only people who have travelled overseas, are unwell, and have access to a face-mask should use it.</p> <div data-bbox="738 1514 1323 1886"> <p>Coronavirus: What you need to do</p> <div> <p>Wash your hands</p> <p>Use a tissue for coughs</p> <p>Avoid touching your face</p> </div> </div>

If you're concerned

Call the Coronavirus Health Information Line for advice.

Call this line if you are seeking information on coronavirus (COVID-19). The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

1800 020 080

If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

Be a Germ-Buster

WASH YOUR HANDS



Branch Reports—

MONTO—The book shop at the time of receipt of this report was still open noticeably not as many tourists travelling through and most of the book sales were to locals. Monto has closed their library like most other areas/councils. Monto supplied a letter about their last meeting from President Bill Brown and mentioned good rain experienced in the area.

CHILDERS - Closed until further notice. Everyone is well and they have plenty of green grass! Thanks to recent rains.

HERVEY BAY - All are well. Venue closed until further notice.

CALOUNDRA - All well. Closed until further notice. Because of the restrictions caused by the Corona Virus Frank is unable to pick up the Pension Petition forms which have been circulated around Caloundra. A letter from Frank is featured in this edition. The feature in the Senior Newspaper circulated throughout Australia gained great support.

GYMPIE - All are well in Gympie. Concerts have been shut down until end of June. Stay safe everyone. From Maureen Perry.

Contact has been made with a number of branches and like every other branch, the Central Queensland Branches are in limbo like every other branch in the State. Bowen's President Joyce Macdonald said the branch had held its first meeting but is now waiting for the virus to dissipate.

CONFERENCE 2020.

Obviously, the holding of the State Conference in September is out of the question.

Maureen Perry has extensively covered the subject of a postponed conference and there is only one available date and venue. As other organisations are anticipating the ALL CLEAR the only available dates and availability of places to hold the Conference are as follows :

- Date—Sunday November 8 (Arrive/setup)
Monday 9/11 & Tuesday 10/11 STATE CONFERENCE
- Venue - The Gympie Bowls Club (Very accessible)

We are deemed to have an annual meeting / conference and I believe this is the best we can come up. There maybe question that what will the situation be at that time. We should know by September and if not, we may have to cancel.

I would pay compliments to Maureen Perry who on a number of occasions has spent hours on the phone and leg work firstly with the September date and now with a revised date.

As I previously said, availability of venues is extremely scarce as other organisations will come out of hibernation.

To anyone who doubts that we should go ahead...I say, WHY NOT? Let's be positive!

The May Management Meeting which is in the throes of being organized through Zoom will undoubtedly discuss the proposal.

Cherith Weis

Don't forget the animals!

RSPCA Qld is urging all Queenslanders to spare a thought for the animals in these times of uncertainty and continue to support the RSPCA.

"As you can imagine the majority of the RSPCA's work is hands on, so although a small number of our staff can work from home, for our Inspectors, veterinarians and animal attendants and volunteers it is business as usual," said RSPCA Qld spokesperson Michael Beatty. "So far the general public have been incredibly supportive. People are still continuing to adopt and we've had 150 new foster carers sign on and they'll be in demand in the weeks and months to come."

"We'd urge people to continue to adopt but sadly we have to remind people that, due to recent Government directives, our Care Centres cannot be used as public gathering places. So please only come if you are genuinely thinking of adopting now or in the near future. We also currently have forty horses in foster care that desperately need new homes so that their carers are free to take on other animals."

Although in other parts of the globe some animal charities have seen an increase in the number of animals surrendered, so far this has not been the case in Australia. Sadly however this may eventuate and it's the generosity and support of the public that will enable RSPCA Qld to continue its vital work.

"I think people realise just how much comfort animals bring to our lives. In times of stress they help us to remain calm. More and more these days we see animals being used in all forms of therapy and the benefits they bring are almost immeasurable. Below are some tips for you and your pet that will hopefully be of use in the coming weeks."

The Essentials. Make sure that you have at least two weeks' worth of food for your pet. If they are on any medications or a prescription veterinary diet have at least a month's stock of both. For cats, ensure you have enough cat litter and if your dog does have to stay inside with you for a few weeks consider having enough poo bags. To keep your pet healthy, have at least a month of parasite prevention. Call your vet before visiting to ensure they have the food or medicine ready for you to help with social distancing.

Buddy Up .Contact and designate someone to look after

you pet if you need to go to hospital. Make sure they have a way to access your house and know your pets and their requirements. Have all food clearly marked with feeding instructions. If your pet is on medications have instructions on what and when, and to make it easier have at least two weeks of medications pre dispensed into labeled pill organizers. Write up a day planner of your pets' normal routine and quirks so that whoever is looking after them can keep their routine as stable as possible. Have a call list which includes your veterinarian, alternate nearby veterinarian and available boarding facilities.

Pet Documents and ID. Gather up all the essential documents relating to your pet and have them easily accessible. Make sure your microchip registration details are up to date and consider a secondary form of identification for your pet such as a collar and tag. Have a full list of emergency contacts including yours and family and friends' phone numbers and email addresses.

Emergency Accommodation, Research and contact local boarding or pet minding facilities near you in the event that your pet requires emergency accommodation. Ask them to email you their boarding paperwork so this can be pre filled out and also send them any vaccination or registration paperwork in advance so that even a stranger could get them to safe accommodation. Have appropriate transport crates or leashes for each pet and place these within easy access. Most boarding facilities will require up to date vaccinations, so check your pet's vaccination status and call your vet if you require a booster.

Isolation Enrichment. If you and your pet do need to self-isolate make sure you keep their mind and body active. For cats, this includes at least 30 minutes of one on one playtime or interaction; new toys that can be brought out for stimulation and indoor cat grass for nibbling on. For dogs that are usually walked you will have to find alternate ways to keep them active: Lots of one on one games, rotate dog toys and have a stock of new ones, play hide and seek, teach them new tricks, give them treat balls that make them work for the reward,

Michael Beatty
Media and Community Relations
Wacol Animal Care Campus
RSPCA Queensland



RULES FOR TEACHERS IN 1879

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys, before beginning work.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop, will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labour faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of two shillings and sixpence per week in his pay providing the Board of Education approve.

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Activities on hold

CHECK OUT THIS WEB SITE!

All you want to know
about Australian Govern-
ment Payments including:

-

All pensions; Carer Allow-
ance; Newstart; Farm
Household Allowance; Es-
sential Medical Equipment
Payment; Energy Supple-
ment; Austudy and rele-
vant phone numbers and
much more

Department of Human Ser-
vices - A guide to Aus-
tralian Government
payments

Web site - human-
services.gov.au

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**Seniors'
Luncheon**

Letter to Frank Gower—re. Pension Petition

Hi Frank

We spoke yesterday on the phone regarding the campaign to increase the single pension. If you would care to send me some forms I will make sure they find a very welcome home!

I currently live in Nelson Bay and moved here 16 months ago to be nearer family. I was very active in community committees in my home town of Port Kembla so will onforward some to my old 'colleagues in crime'.

I was a sole parent in the 60's receiving no help at all from either my spouse or the Govt. Then it was child endowment for which I received one dollar per fortnight for the first child and 50 cents for the second. I worked until I was 67 as my daughter was in the same position as I had been and had three children so I was able to help her out.

The disparity between single and married pensions needs to be looked at as the difference is huge even though we have the same bills to pay. I also get annoyed at anyone who considers the pension to be a government funded 'gift' as when I started work our annual group certificate always showed total tax paid and then a another column showing what portion of that tax was set aside for future pension! A lot of people have forgotten that. I left school at 14 for family reasons and later on when superannuation did come in women were completely discouraged from joining.

I wish you well in the campaign.

Name withheld

NELSON BAY NSW 2315



VALE

Gympie sadly lost a member in March.

Mr. Albert Bulley was a member of the Gympie Branch.

We send our condolences to his family.

From Gladstone.....

Lillian (Iris) Rabnott

Iris was a long serving member for many years.

She was one of our Life Member and served on the Committee, until she became unwell and had to go into New Auckland Place Nursing Home, about two years ago.

Iris joined about 1980's she died in her sleep on January 8, 2020.

Sincere sympathy is forwarded to her family from all at APSL.

I talked with a man today, an 80+ year old man.

I asked him if there was anything I can get him while this Coronavirus scare was gripping the world.

He simply smiled, looked away and said: "Let me tell you what I need! I need to believe, at some point, this country my generation fought for... I need to believe this nation we handed safely to our children and their children...

I need to know this generation will quit being a bunch of sissies...that they respect what they've been given...that they've earned what others sacrificed for." I wasn't sure where the conversation was going or if it was going anywhere at all. So, I sat there, quietly observing.

"You know, I was a little boy during WWII. Those were scary days. We didn't know if we were going to be speaking English, German or Japanese at the end of the war. There was no certainty, no guarantees like we all enjoy today. And no home went without sacrifice or loss. Every house, up and down every street, had someone in harm's way.

Maybe their Daddy was a soldier, maybe their son was a sailor, maybe it was an uncle.

Sometimes it was the whole damn family...fathers, sons, uncles...Having someone, you love, sent off to war...it wasn't less frightening than it is today. It was scary as Hell. If anything, it was more frightening. We didn't have battle front news. We didn't have email or mobile phones. You sent them away and you hoped...you prayed. You may not hear from them for months, if ever. Sometimes a mother was getting her son's letters the same day Dad was comforting her over their child's death. And we sacrificed. You couldn't buy things.

Everything was rationed. You were only allowed so much milk per month, only so much bread, toilet paper.

EVERYTHING was restricted for the war effort. And what you weren't using, what you didn't need, things you threw away, they were saved and sorted for the war effort. My generation was the original recycling movement in the world. And we had viruses back then...serious viruses. Things like polio, measles, and such. It was nothing to walk to school and pass a house or two that was quarantined. We didn't shut down our schools. We didn't shut down our cities. We carried on, without masks, without hand sanitizer.

And do you know what? We persevered. We overcame. We didn't attack our Presidents, Prime Ministers or whoever, we came together. We rallied around the flag for the war. Thick or thin, we were in it to win.

And we would lose more boys in an hour of combat than we lose in entire wars today."

He slowly looked away again. Maybe I saw a small tear in the corner of his eye. Then he continued:

"Today's kids don't know sacrifice. They think a sacrifice is not having coverage on their phone while they freely drive across the country.

Today's kids are selfish and spoiled.

In my generation, we looked out for our elders. We helped out with single moms who's husbands were either at war or dead from war.

Today's kids rush the store, buying everything they can...no concern for anyone but themselves.

It's shameful the way kids behave these days. None of them deserve the sacrifices their granddads made.

So, no I don't need anything. I appreciate your offer but, I know I've been through worse things than this virus.

But maybe I should be asking you, what can I do to help you?

Do you have enough to get through this, enough steak?

Will you be able to survive with 113 channels on your tv?"

I smiled, fighting back a tear of my own...now humbled by a man in his 80's.

All I could do was thank him for the history lesson, leave my number for emergency and leave with my ego firmly tucked in my rear.

I talked to a man today. A real man. A man from an era long gone and forgotten.

We will never understand the sacrifices.

We will never fully earn their sacrifices.

But we should work harder to learn about them....learn from them...to respect them.

I saw this and it was too good not to share with you.

Message to Branches

This space box is provided to insert your Branch contact details when you leave The Comet at Doctors' Surgeries /Libraries and so on



CODE of ETHICS and PERSONAL CONDUCT

The Australian Pensioners' & Superannuants' League (Qld) Inc.

Be patient and courteous in all dealings with fellow members.

Be inclusive - Members to welcome and support people of all backgrounds and identities and discriminate against no one.

Be considerate - Each member should respect fellow pensioners and superannuants. Our decisions and comments will affect our fellow members, therefore we must always take this into consideration.

Be respectful - Each member may not agree all the time, but disagreement is no excuse for disrespectful behaviour. Each member may experience frustration from time to time, but we cannot allow this to become a personal attack. An environment where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not productive or creative and not in the best interest of The League.

Choose your words carefully - Always conduct yourself professionally. Harassment and exclusionary behaviour is not acceptable in The League. Differences of opinion and disagreement will occur, each member must resolve disagreements and differing views constructively and respectfully.

Our differences can be our strengths - Members can find strength in diversity. Different people have varying perspectives on issues, and that can be valuable for solving problems or generating new ideas for the betterment of The League.

ooOoo

APSL Mission Statement

To lobby powerfully with governments at all levels and private sector agencies, and within community sector, to promote all aspects of the security, well being and dignity of pensioners of all ages, superannuants, other self-funded retirees, low income families and other disadvantaged people, including Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) and Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) peoples.