



MEDIA RELEASE

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WA GOVERNMENT IS PICKPOCKETING PEOPLE IN PUBLIC HOUSING

The Barnett Government in Western Australia is pickpocketing the pensions, family payments and supplements of public housing residents, and the Turnbull Government is doing nothing to stop them.

The WA Government recently wrote to public housing residents advising them that from the end of this month, they will start charging them more for rent by including supplement payments that have always been exempted from assessable income.

Under these changes, public housing residents could have hundreds of dollars ripped out of their pockets every year.

Public housing residents, who live on very low incomes, rely on these supplements to make ends meet. The supplements help make sure pensioners, families and vulnerable Australians don't fall into poverty.

These modest payments from the Federal Government are meant to protect the living standards of people on low incomes. They aren't meant to be raided by state governments.

It is disgraceful that the Barnett Government would deliberately pick the pockets of the most vulnerable people in the state to fix their own bottom line.

While the Barnett Government is taking money from pensioners and families in public housing, the Turnbull Government is turning a blind eye. Social Services Minister Christian Porter should be pressuring his former colleagues to reverse this unfair cash grab.

The Barnett Government last tried to take supplements from pensioners in 2012 when Christian Porter was the state Treasurer. The Federal Labor Government stood up and protected pensioners who lived in public housing, and the WA Government backed down.

After Christian Porter tried to rob public housing pensioners when he was WA Treasurer, he is now sitting on his hands while his Liberal mates try the same trick again.

If Christian Porter cared about public housing residents in his own state, he would make sure this terrible decision is reversed. He should be standing up for vulnerable West Australians.

Previously exempt Commonwealth payments include:

- Family Tax Benefit Part A Supplement - \$726 a year per child.
- Family Tax Benefit Part B Supplement - \$354 a year per family.
- Pension Supplement – as much as \$1677 a year for single pensioners.
- Carer Allowance – more than \$3200 a year.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance – a small payment for people on income support to help them purchase necessary prescriptions.
- Bereavement Allowance – a modest, short-term payment for people whose partner has recently died.

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