



Pensioners downplay bonus pay

AUSTRALIAN Pensioners and Superannuants League (APSL) policy co-ordinator Ray Ferguson has labelled the \$500 pensioners' bonus a "carrot".

"It's a one-off bonus that's a bit of a carrot," Mr Ferguson said.

"It won't last long as pensioners have outstanding bills.

"Maybe they'll be able to have one more outing, but then they'll have the basic pension rate of \$273 a week."

Ipswich pensioners such as Pearl Downey of Newtown received the \$500 bonus payment this week.

Many more residents have received a letter saying they will be paid the bonus before June 30.

The letter also advised the pensioners' utilities allowance had increased to \$500 per annum for eligible single pensioners and \$62.50 per person for married or partnered pensioners.

"It means a lot to the pensioners that are not very well off - there's quite a few struggling pensioners



Elizabeth SPRY

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in Ipswich," APSL Ipswich president Glyn Marsden said.

Mr Marsden said the bonus payment would enable some pensioners to attend daily bus trips they otherwise wouldn't have

been able to afford.

"Our bus trips cost \$32 a month.

Five hundred dollars makes it a lot easier for them to afford a visit to the North Coast or down to Brunswick Heads."

But for Mrs Downey, the bonus simply means she'll be able to move to Toowoomba.

"It will be handy because I'm shifting," Mrs Downey said.

"That money will go towards my bond."

The bonus payment will not be taxable for income tax purposes or treated as income for social security or veterans' affairs purposes.

'Five hundred dollars makes it a lot easier for them to afford a visit to the North Coast or down to Brunswick Heads.'

— John Marsden



HEALTHY SACRIFICE: The Queensland Times journalists Felicity Caldwell and Andrew Korner have been taking part in DRUG ARM'S Healthy High campaign which involves giving up alcohol for 10 days.

Photo: Rob Williams JN2508WC

Dry run helping raise funds

HELLO, my name is Felicity Caldwell, and it is seven days since my last drink.

No, I have not joined Alcoholics Anonymous, but I recently made a promise to give up alcohol between June 20 to 29 with QT journalist Andrew Korner and two Ipswich residents for the Healthy High Challenge.

The challenge raises money for DRUG ARM's Street Outreach Service which helps more than 30,000 homeless people with alcohol and drug problems every year.

The first night, last Friday, was hard.

After a long week all I wanted to do was settle down on the

lounge with a beer or go out and party with my friends.

But my feelings of regret were swept away when I woke up Saturday morning feeling great and ready to leap over all my sleepy and hung-over housemates.

QT country reporter Andrew Korner said last weekend was fairly easy but he had started dreaming about alcohol.

"I was in a beer garden hiding in the corner drinking a can of beer and everyone was walking past looking at me with threatening eyes," Mr Korner said.

"I was trying to drink it secretly."

Team member Bernadette

Steinhardt said her friends told her to drink anyway but she wanted to do the challenge for herself.

"If I can't do two weekends then that's terrible," Ms Steinhardt said.

Team member Clint Scott said it was easy to not drink during week days because he worked as a plumber.

But most of his social events last weekend involved alcohol.

Team QT was the second-highest team fundraiser for Healthy High yesterday only behind the official DRUG ARM team. To sponsor us and raise money for DRUG ARM visit www.everydayhero.com.au/teamqt.

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Welcome home troops

A LOCAL Vietnam veteran is urging Ipswich residents to welcome home troops from Iraq this Saturday in Brisbane.

A parade of 500 servicemen and women will start at 10am in Adelaide Street and finish with a gathering at the town hall for family and friends at noon. Laidley Vietnam Veterans president Terry Pinkerton said he

thought it was fitting to show support to the troops.

"It's imperative they get a good welcome home parade," Mr Pinkerton said.

The Reserves Forces Day Committee is also holding its first recognition ceremony in RSL Park, Ipswich on Saturday at 10am in support of Defence Force Reservists.

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