

NAPWA submission to Pension Review

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The attached submission was made by NAPWA to the federal government's [review of the pension system](#) [1].

Summary

1. Based on the success of combination [antiretroviral](#) [2] medication or other substance which is active against retroviruses such as HIV. medications, HIV infection has taken on the form of a chronic, episodic illness or disability. Given the variable nature of the course of HIV illness and the direct and indirect side effects of current treatments, people with HIV may have to move in and out of paid employment and the welfare system as the state of their health demands. Many people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH/A) are dealing with the effects not only of HIV infection but also of ageing. The design and functioning of Australia's social security system has a direct impact upon a significant proportion of PLWH/A, and the National Association of People Living With HIV/AIDS (NAPWA) supports any moves that might be taken to strengthen the financial security of seniors, carers and people with disability.
2. The ability of people with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS to maintain their health and well-being is severely compromised by financial hardship and the stresses associated with an ongoing struggle to make ends meet. Costs associated with increases to the base rate of pensions need to be weighed at the health and social policy level with the costs associated with treatment of, and rehabilitation following, morbidity exacerbated by the substandard living conditions and stresses of the many citizens living with chronic illness. Since PLWH/A are amongst these, NAPWA is in support of any moves by government to increase the base rate of pensions.
3. Consideration could be given to making the single rate of pension closer to 70 per cent of the combined couple rate.
4. Any improvements to public health, public housing and public transport would represent concrete benefits to people reliant upon income support.
5. Australia provides a wide range of supplementary payments and concessions to people reliant upon income support, which NAPWA strongly supports. Consideration could be given to ensuring greater uptake of such entitlements through the provision of public information and easing of the administrative burden associated with concessions such as the [PBS](#) [3][Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme] The federal government program which subsidises medication costs in Australia. Anti-HIV drugs are part of a special part of the PBS called Section 100 (S100) which is used for expensive, highly specialised drugs. Safety Net.
6. Any moves that might be adopted by policy makers to make it easier for people with chronic illnesses such as HIV/AIDS to find and keep work in the open labour market, and hence reduce their dependency upon the income support system, are welcomed and supported by NAPWA. The health care benefits implicit in receiving the DSP could possibly be retained for those engaging in work, but on low incomes, by the introduction of a 'Chronic Illness Concession Card' focused on alleviating costs associated with maintaining well-being in the face of chronic illness.

The full text of the submission can be found in the attached PDF document.

Attachment	Size	Type
PDF version of this submission [4]	301.83 KB	 PDF

- [Disability Support Pension](#)
- [HIV Living](#)
- [submission](#)

Links:

[1] http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/seniors/pension_review.htm

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/122>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/121>

[4] [http://www.napwa.org.au/files/NAPWA submission to Pension Review.pdf](http://www.napwa.org.au/files/NAPWA%20submission%20to%20Pension%20Review.pdf)

from the NAPWA website at

<http://www.napwa.org.au/papers/2008/napwa-submission-to-pension-review>
