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Title:

Press release: Big tax cuts for pensioners

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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN.

BIG TAX CUTS FOR PENSIONERS.

9.1.73

The main State Government and local taxes paid by pensioners in South Australia are to be halved under a new scheme announced by the Premier, Mr. Dunstan, today.

The tax cuts will apply to water and sewerage rates, land tax and local council rates.

The scheme will operate from July 1, the start of the new financial year.

Mr. Dunstan, who is also State Treasurer, said legislation would be necessary to introduce the scheme.

If delayed beyond July 1 it would contain a special provision to make it retrospective to that date.

"These new proposals will bring considerable relief to pensioners who depend on small fixed incomes", the Premier said.

It was expected that it would cost the State Government more than \$2 million a year to operate.

Under the scheme:

- . Water and sewerage rates will be reduced by half on application by eligible pensioners. There will be a maximum reduction of \$80 on the combined figure.
- . Council rates will be reduced by half on application by eligible pensioners. There will be an \$80 maximum reduction and Councils will be reimbursed by the State Government.
- . Land tax will be reduced by half on the same basis.

Eligible pensioners are:

- . Age, invalid, civilian widow and war service pensioners who hold a medical service entitlement card issued by the Commonwealth Department of Social Service.
- . T.P.I. pensioners.

- War widow, war widowed mothers, any person who is the unmarried mother of a deceased unmarried serviceman, all of whom hold a medical service entitlement card or are in circumstances that, if they were receiving a pension, would be entitled to a card.
- People deemed to be eligible by the State Government.

The concessions will not apply, however, where pensioners have living with them people in receipt of at least the State living wage.

Mr. Dunstan said the council rates to be reduced included general rates, separate rates including charges for sewerage effluent disposal, special rates and garbage removal fees where these were charged separately.

They would apply to all ^{eligible} ratepaying pensioners for one residence.

Councils would retain the power to give further concessions beyond the 50% but these would not be reimbursed by the Government.

The Premier also announced that legislation would be prepared to allow payment of rates in four instalments by all ratepayers.

Road moiety charges were not included in the scheme.

In respect of water and sewerage rates the concessions would apply to charges due from July 1, but not to any unpaid or accrued rates.

The amount of rebate water available under the reduced rate will be that available had full rates been paid.

All excess water will be charged at the full charge for excess water, irrespective of whether the full reduction of \$80 applies or not.

Special charges for connection or alteration of services, meter testing etc. are not subject to any reduction under these concessions.

Mr. Dunstan said details of how the scheme would operate and the methods of application would be announced later this year.