

BPiA's regular report July 2018

Following my recent visit to the UK, we'd like to advise you that BPiA are considering, with the International Consortium of Pensioners [ICBP], to change the UK organisation to manage our fight for justice. The ICBP had previously been approached by Tendo Consulting to run our campaign, but at that time we were heavily involved in organising the CHOGM project. With that project being unsuccessful, mainly because our PM declined to get involved, we have now to decide how to proceed going forward and ICBP feel a new approach may be worth investigating and progressing. Tendo were responsible for the Gurkha's successful campaign with the help of Joanna Lumley.

I also met with Gina Miller of the True and Fair Foundation, who has shown an interest in our campaign and she is now considering much information which requested of me and with which I have supplied her, since my arrival back in Sydney.

Meanwhile I have taken to writing to my Federal MP, critical of the PM at CHOGM and I am hopeful all our members will follow my example below. Using your own words, please send a similar letter, critical of the PM's' lack of performance at CHOGM, to your Federal MP, to encourage him/her to take up this issue with the PM in Parliament at Canberra.

Mr Craig Kelly MP

Federal Member for Hughes

Shop 1, 9-15 East Parade

Sutherland, NSW 1499

Dear Craig,

I am writing on this occasion to express my great disappointment of the PM, Malcolm Turnbull, who, it seems, failed to raise publicly the issue of "frozen" British pensions at the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) in London. Attending that meeting, were most of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, who had earlier been briefed, by our International organisation, of the outrageous issue of frozen UK pensions and how they adversely affect the retirement incomes of their own people, who had worked for some time in the UK.

The pensions paid by the UK to people retired in Australia and most Commonwealth countries are "frozen" at the rate of the first payment made abroad. This also adversely affects Australia's potential foreign exchange income by about \$500 million/year. I and BPiA's Chairman briefed the Prime Minister the Hon Malcolm Turnbull on this issue, in January 2018, and we were left, at the time, with the view that he was sympathetic to our argument and seemed to think CHOGM could be a good forum, at which to raise the matter.

However, later and prior to CHOGM, we were advised by letter that the PM no longer considered CHOGM a suitable forum in which to raise the issue, because of a convention that no Commonwealth nation criticises another member's policies. We question this opinion, because member nations must have criticised others in the past, resulting in some Commonwealth countries' membership being suspended for a period; e.g. Zimbabwe, Pakistan and Fiji.

BPiA is a non-profit association of British pensioners dedicated to force the UK to up-rate all UK pensioners' pensions fairly and equally, irrespective of where in the world we reside.

We understand from media reports that the PM did have a private discussion with the British Prime Minister whilst in London, but whether the frozen pension issue was raised, we have no idea. What was discussed remains confidential. The UK's frozen pension issue has been challenged for decades. Various past Australian Governments, as well as the current one, have assured us that they'll continue to press the UK on this matter. However, the feedback provided gives us no confidence that Australia is serious about a solution to resolve this matter, for we believe to succeed would require one of the Commonwealth nations, possibly Australia with most to gain, to really shock the UK Government into action.

UK State pensions are funded by the UK's National Insurance Scheme. Contributions are compulsory for everyone working in the UK and are regularly deducted from wages and salaries. On reaching pension age almost every contributor is paid a State pension, based on contribution years.

About 1.2 Million expats are in receipt of a UK State pension and 670,500 of these expats reside in the USA, the EU, Jamaica, Israel and some other countries. Moreover, UK pensions are uprated in these countries at the same rate as those living in the UK. The other 519,000 expat pensioners are penalized, their UK pensions being "frozen" at the rate of their first payment received abroad. Most of these frozen pensions are made to those who have migrated or returned to Commonwealth countries. Currently there are about 237,800 of these expatriates retired in Australia in receipt of a frozen UK pension. We believe it is reasonable that these people, most of whom are now Australian citizens, would expect the Australian Government to challenge the UK Government on their behalf and against this blatant UK Government policy which is unfair, unequal and discriminatory.

Surely the recent \$35Billion contract to build UK designed warships, would have been an ideal opportunity to insist, that in return, the UK's pension discrimination should cease.

We urge you please to bring to the attention of all Australian parliamentarians, this lost opportunity the PM had, to raise this issue at CHOGM. For not only is this UK policy costing the Australian economy, and consequently subsidising the UK economy, by \$500 Million per annum in lost foreign exchange revenue, it is costing Australia even more, because those British expatriates, who also receive a means-tested aged pension from Australia, are provided more Australian pension from Centrelink, than they would be given, if their UK pension was not frozen.

I look forward to hearing from you and how you might be able to help resolve this long-standing issue. More can be discovered about the frozen pension issue at www.pensionjustice.org.

Yours Sincerely

Jim Tilley.

Vice Chairman

British Pensions in Australia Inc.

Thank you for your co-operation, to assist us with our campaign for justice.

Jim Tilley

5/7/2018

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