



The Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale MP

Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Frozen British Pensions

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The Hon Amanda Rishworth

Minister for Families and Social Services

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Dear Minister,

I am writing as Chair of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Frozen British Pensions to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Families and Social Services, and to invite you to our next virtual meeting to discuss the UK Government's discriminatory 'frozen' pensions policy and its impact on 230,000 British pensioners residing in Australia.

For seventy years, successive British governments have upheld a two-tiered approach to state pensions, providing annual inflation-linked increments only to those pensioners residing in certain overseas countries. This policy is the result of historic reciprocal arrangements negotiated with a handful of overseas nations such as the US, the EU, and several other countries. As a result, British pensioners residing in these nations are entitled to their full, uprated, state pension however those living in other countries – including 230,000 British pensioners in Australia – have their pensions 'frozen' at the rate in which they first started receiving their state pension, or first left the UK.

This means the pensions of Britons in Australia fall in real terms year on year, with some receiving as little as £22 per week - \$38.50 in Australian Dollars. 100-year-old, Patricia Coulthard, for example who lives in Sydney receives just £46 per week compared to the £141.85 she would receive if she lived in the UK. I believe this is a disgraceful way for the UK to treat its citizens, and to treat Australia, a fellow Commonwealth nation. It should make no difference whether a pensioner resides in the UK, the US, or Australia – and yet the British Government appears to value each nation, and the pensioners within them, differently.

We know that the UK Government could choose to end this injustice through domestic legislation and that the position of the last Australian Government was that it was the UK Government who should end this disgraceful policy rather than for Australia to request a reciprocal agreement.

We understand that you must have many constraints on your time and can offer to arrange our next meeting around your schedule and to accommodate for the time difference between the UK and Australia. I would be delighted to provide any further information should you need and thank you most kindly for considering this request.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale MP

Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Frozen British Pensions