

Senior changes begin

New scheme kicking off

LAUREN ROBERTS

TERRITORY seniors advocates fear changes to the NT's Pensioner, Seniors and Carers schemes, which come into effect today, will create "two classes" of senior citizens.

From today, the NT Pensioner & Carer Concession Scheme will split into the NT Concession Scheme and the Seniors Recognition Scheme.

Association of independent Retirees Darwin branch president Graeme Bevis said self-funded retirees would not fare better in the new scheme.

Seniors currently eligible for the concession scheme will continue to get financial support with cost of living expenses of about \$3000 per year.

However, retirees who do not receive a pension, will get just \$500 per year.

"One thing missed out on was the treating of all seniors equally," Mr Bevis said.

"It will create two classes of seniors here. The people they have excluded are self-funded retirees. A lot of people wrongly think self-funded retirees are rich people - don't forget, they have put their money



KEY CHANGES FROM TODAY

- All Territorians aged 65 years or older are eligible for a \$500 annual payment that can be used for travel, electricity, or water
- Means-tested seniors eligible under the current scheme will get about \$3000 for cost of living expenses
- Scheme members will continue to receive concessions for property rates, garbage, motor vehicle registration, driver licence and spectacles

aside to help them retire."

COTA NT chief executive Sue Shearer welcomed many of the changes, but said there was still a long way to go before Territory seniors were all treated equally. "We just believe in equality," she said.

"I know it differentiates based on economic circum-

stances, but people who are self-funded retirees don't have a lot of money."

Seniors aren't the only group to be impacted by changes today.

From today, welfare recipients who don't show up for job interviews will accumulate demerit points, which may see

their payments reduced. Territorians who enjoy shopping online will be forced to pay GST on overseas purchases under \$1000.

In good news for first homebuyers, people can withdraw any additional super contributions made in the past year to buy a home.

There'll also be a ban on banks sending unsolicited card limit increase offers to customers unless they opt to receive them.

From tomorrow, new childcare rebates kick in, removing an annual \$7613 cap for low- and middle-income families earning up to \$185,000.

Trio face car attack charges

THREE people have been arrested and charged after they allegedly used a vehicle to run over two women.

The assaults happened on Tuesday night, when the car hit the women, including a 21-year-old who sustained severe spinal injuries.

The incident left three people in hospital with serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

Serious crime squad detectives charged a 55-year-old woman with three counts of recklessly endangering life, and one count of aggravated assault and driving in a dangerous manner. Two others, a 38-year-old woman and a 26-year-old man, were also charged with aggravated assault, criminal damage and being armed with offensive weapons.

On Wednesday, St John Ambulance spokesman Craig Garraway said the vehicle involved in the recent pedestrian hit at Knuckey's Lagoon seemed to be "hooning around the community" when it struck the women. He said the number of pedestrians injured or killed by vehicle hits in the NT this year had risen to 130.

"These are concerning trends because, obviously, the impact of a car hitting a pedestrian can be fatal - we've just been lucky so far we haven't had any more fatalities from it."



ON SALE TODAY
9AM TILL STOCKS LAST

FUSION FIREWORKS WOULD LIKE TO WISH ALL A
HAPPY TERRITORY DAY

- Please Play Safe
- Respect Others
- Clean Up All Spent Fireworks
- Following Instructions Carefully

LOCATIONS

- CASUARINA SQUARE (XEX - BODYCON) NEAR K-MART
- OASIS SHOPPING VILLAGE - SHOP 15B (NEXT TO KERRY'S MASSAGE)
- DARWIN CITY CNR DALY ST/WOOD ST (NEXT TO SHELL SERVO)
- MILLNER VILLAGE PLAZA
- KARAMA SHOPPING PLAZA (FRONT CAR PARK POP UP STORE) (CNR FITZGERALD ST & BAGOT RD)
- 582 STUART HIGHWAY WINNELLIE (OLD TNT BUILDING)
- OLD JACK'S MELON FARM BEHIND COATES COMPOUND (ACCESS VIA DRIVEWAY ON LEFT HAND SIDE)
- 1 TULAGI ROAD YARRAWONGA (CNR STUART HWY)
- PALMERSTON SHOPPING CENTRE 2 STORES (NEXT TO SMOKE MART)



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