



Pension boost for four million Australians

About four million people are set to receive a bigger pension payment from this month, the federal government says. The pension payment to singles will rise by \$29.20 a fortnight to \$701.10 from March 20, Community Services Minister Jenny Macklin said in a statement. For couples on a combined pension the payment will rise by \$44.00 a fortnight to \$1,057.00.

Those on the age pension, disability support pension, carer payment, veteran income support payments, wife pension, widow B pension and bereavement allowance will receive the increases. The parenting payment will rise by \$26.80 a fortnight. Adult allowance rates, such as Newstart, will increase by \$6.80 a fortnight for single people aged 21 or over with no

children. Rent assistance will also rise.

The increased payments will be accompanied by an increase in the amount of income or the total value of assets a person can have before their benefit is cancelled. Deeming rates will also increase on March 20 from record low levels during the global financial crisis, as the economy recovers and rates of return on investments begin to rise, Ms Macklin said. The deeming rate will rise from two per cent to three per cent for investments up to \$42,000 for single pensioners and \$70,000 for a couple.

It will increase from three per cent to four and a half per cent for balances over these amounts.

Exciting news from the Bulldog Theatre Company

All of us here at the Bulldog Theatre Company hope you all had a great summer season.

The Bulldog Theatre Company is turning 5 this year. Not in our wildest dreams did we think we would be here. In fact, 4 years ago, creating a theatre company was the furthest thing from our minds.

2009 was Bulldog Theatre's biggest year. Alex & Eve: The Wedding exceeded all our expectations with an extended sold-out season at the Factory Theatre and culminated in a sold-out show at Enmore Theatre.

In October, Bulldog Theatre had the good fortune of touring interstate for the first time travelling to the Royalty Theatre in Adelaide where we performed the original Alex & Eve to sold-out houses.

We would like to extend all of you a sincere thank you for your extraordinary support in 2009. The reality is, without your support, we cannot tell our stories. Telling relevant, contemporary stories is something we take very seriously. We work extremely hard to honour your support. We hope we have justified the



good faith you have shown Bulldog Theatre.

We have an exciting year planned for 2010.

As a result of the success of Alex & Eve, plans are underway to shoot the movie version later this year. We are excited to announce the director of the film will be Peter Andrikidis who has just directed The Wog Boy 2: Kings Of Mykonos and the Underbelly series.

In the last few months, we have been working extremely hard on developing the film script and many great story ideas have been discovered. So we have transferred all these new story ideas into the original stage script of Alex & Eve which has elevated the stage production even more.

So therefore, we will be touring the revamped original ALEX & EVE to Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide and come home to Sydney for a two week season beginning Thursday June 10th to Sunday June

20th at the Factory Theatre as part of the Greek Festival Of Sydney with ALEX & EVE: THE BABY to follow in May of 2011.

For those who haven't seen the original Alex & Eve, feel free to click on the below you tube link for a 1 minute trailer of the play. (if link does not work you can go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmBcUZawoI8 and punch in Alex & Eve

Tickets for the Sydney season have gone on sale. In an attempt to give our loyal supporters first dibs on the best seats, we will not announce tickets are on sale till March 20th, the opening of the Greek Festival. Our popular 2 for 1 Thursday offer is available as is our "groups of 10 or more" at concession price offer. You can go to www.factorytheatre.com.au or call 9550 3666 for more information.

And we are excited to announce we will now accept submissions from emerging

playwrights as we seek to foster new talent. To get more information on our submissions process, you can go to our revamped website www.bulldogtheatre.com.

We will have ticket giveaways for our Sydney season, so do keep an ear out for those announcements.

So there's plenty to look forward to.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank our major sponsors Century Venues, M & J Chickens, the Greek Festival Of Sydney, George Khouzame catering and fine foods, the Antenna Network, MKJ financial services, MAS Auto, the Steki Taverna and Detroit Customs. Their support has been overwhelming. If you ever go to any of these companies, let them know you heard about them through Alex & Eve!

There is plenty to look forward to in 2010.

Goodbye for now. Hope to see you at the theatre.

Regards
Helena Stamoulis



Greek Festival of Sydney

The 28th annual Greek Festival of Sydney will launch with a two day long celebration at Darling Harbour on the 20th and 21st of March. Bring your family, bring your appetites and bring your dancing shoes for two days of music, fine food and Greek festivities. Entry is free of charge for all.

On this weekend the foreshores of Darling Harbour will come alive to the sounds of fabulous Greek music, the aromas of sumptuous Greek food, dazzling displays of Greek dancing, and many surprises for the children.

This is the perfect way to celebrate the vibrant multiculturalism of Sydney and to explore the beauty of Greek culture.

From 3pm Saturday the Festival will feature international performers, the best local contemporary youth music acts and Greek dancing groups, children's activities, musical performances, mouth watering Greek delicacies and special guests.

From 10am Sunday, the Greek Orthodox Community of New South Wales will celebrate Greek Independence Day with a traditional parade through Darling Harbour from Pyrmont Bridge to Tumbalong Park, followed by a full day of traditional and contemporary Greek entertainment. The highlights for the day apart from the food, coffee, family atmosphere and friendly crowds are the live music by our long line-up of local and international quality acts.

WHAT: Greek Festival of Sydney

WHEN: Saturday March 20, 3pm-10pm

Sunday March 21, 10am-10pm

WHERE: Darling Harbour, Tumbalong Park Sydney

Welcome to Australia's leading multicultural festival, where everyone is invited to celebrate and explore the beauty of Greek culture through the arts, history, entertainment and food.

The Darling Harbour celebration will kick off the three month long Greek Festival of Sydney with over 30 events scheduled on this year's program, showcasing the depth and diversity of the Greek Culture in Australia.

For more information into the program and to book tickets to selected events, please visit www.greekfestivalofsydney.com.au

'Extinct' frog found in Australia

A frog species thought to have been extinct for more than three decades has been sighted in farmland in Australia.

A thriving community of yellow spotted bell frog has been identified in the Southern Tablelands of New South Wales.

NSW Environment Minister Frank Sartor said the discovery was a reminder of the importance of protecting natural habitats.

"I'm advised that finding this frog is as significant a discovery as a Tasmanian tiger," he added.

"This discovery is a



reminder of the need to protect this environment so future generations can enjoy the noise and colour of our native animals."

The frog species' continued existence was first spotted in 2008. Experts then followed up the sighting and have now confirmed the identification. It is the first sighting since 1973. Mr Sartor said the location of the frogs would remain secret to ensure the survival of the species. There are plans to breed the animals at Taraonga Zoo for re-introduction to the wild.

The International U-

nion for Conversation of Nature says one-third of the world's 6,000 amphibian species are under threat of extinction. Mike Tyler, a frog expert at the University of Adelaide, told the Associated Press that at least a dozen species of Australian frogs were critically endangered and probably more that were not yet known about.

"In the last decade, three new species of frog have been discovered in the Kimberley," he said. The Kimberley is a northern region of Western Australia state.

"I know of two more in the Northern Territory which haven't even yet been described... one of the specimens is sitting here on my desk looking at me."