

Senator, the **Hon Amanda Vanstone** , Minister for Family & Community Services

UK High Court decision lets down pensioners

22 May 2002

I am very disappointed with the United Kingdom High Court's decision that the refusal to pay indexed pensions into countries such as Australia was lawful.

The Australian Government still believes the UK's policy is discriminatory. We will continue to pursue the UK Government over this matter.

The UK Government's policy is simply unfair and it should recognise the compelling moral arguments for paying UK pensioners their proper entitlements.

These people have contributed over many years to earn their pension rights. They have contributed on the same basis as people living in the UK, and former UK residents now in the USA, Israel or the Philippines. Yet they are denied the same benefits.

There are over 220,000 UK pensioners in Australia and over time their UK pensions become increasingly worthless leaving Australian taxpayers to pick up the tab. About 160,000 of these UK pensioners also receive means-tested Australian pensions.

Many of these pensioners served in the UK armed forces and risked their lives defending their country.

I will continue to pursue this matter with the UK government on behalf of all UK pensioners in Australia.

I am considering what further action we might take, including working with other affected countries, like Canada, to support our cause. We will be in contact with our legal counsel over the following days to explore the legal implications of the judgment. That said, the Australian Government will not give up on this matter.

© Commonwealth of Australia, 2001.

This page last modified 23 May 2002.

* ends *