



## **MPs' super bill in budget shadow**

The government's new MPs' superannuation bill will be debated in the shadow of the budget helping avoid public scrutiny of the fact the reforms do not go far enough, according to Peter Andren, Member for Calare.

"Mr Howard's *Parliamentary Superannuation Bill 2004* is listed for debate tonight – budget night. With media attention focused wholly on the budget, it is unlikely to be noticed," Mr Andren said.

"This is perfect for the government and opposition to avoid scrutiny of the blatant double standard of legislating a lesser scheme for new MPs and Senators, but keeping the bloated, over-generous and outrageous old super scheme for themselves.

"Both major parties have recognised how out of touch the *Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Scheme* is, with its equivalent 69% employer contribution, yet they will not give it up.

"If this bill is passed in its current form, the parliament will end up with MPs and Senators on two different pay packets for doing the same job. Commonsense would apply the new scheme to all politicians regardless of when they are elected.

"Following backbench hostility to the super changes, it was agreed the new arrangement would only apply to new parliamentarians after this year's election.

"The reality is no amendment applying the new rules to current MPs and senators will get through, so I will propose that members be allowed to opt-out of the old scheme and into the new one.

"This will give individual parliamentarians the choice to remove themselves from the outrageous scheme with its guaranteed and indexed lifetime pension, and accept the community standard, 9% employer contribution to super available to all other working Australians," Mr Andren said.

"Mr Latham and Mr Howard have been forced by overwhelming public opinion to change the current scheme, but the changes don't go far enough. That's why they're anxious to push them through under the cover of the budget," he added.

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