

SENIORS REVEAL SA ELECTION PRIORITIES

Friday March 4th, 2022 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Seniors Australia has today released its priorities for the South Australian election with a focus on concessions, energy affordability, health, transport and housing.

The country's peak advocacy organisation for older Australians is reminding all sides of politics that one in two voters in Australia is aged 50 or over.

"Past state and federal elections have shown seniors have influenced the outcome and the March 19 poll in South Australia will be no different," said National Seniors Chief Advocate, Ian Henschke.

National Seniors has identified the following issues which need to be addressed.

CONCESSIONS

While acknowledging senior concessions in South Australia are among the most generous in the country, Mr Henschke says all candidates should commit to protecting those concessions.

"We live in a volatile political and economic environment right now.

"Our governments' budgets around the country have been tested by the COVID pandemic and we want to know that concessions won't be touched in the future as an easy means of balancing the books," said Mr Henschke.

ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

National Seniors says energy is a hot button issue amongst older Australians because so many are on fixed incomes and can't keep up financially with rising electricity, gas and water bills.

Its policy document says candidates should, "Examine the outcomes of the 'Solar for Low Income' trial run by the NSW Government in 2019 with a view to implementing a reduced cost Rooftop Solar Installation Program and Home Battery Installation Program for (SA) seniors on low-incomes."

HEALTH

National Seniors wants candidates to commit to addressing a range of health issues including the fallout from the COVID pandemic and its impact on exhausted health professionals.

It also wants a commitment from all sides of politics to examine a proposal for dental initiatives including a travelling dental service for seniors offering a comprehensive examination of their oral health with a particular focus on regional South Australia.

“The Royal Commission into Aged Care singled out the regions as being particularly disadvantaged in servicing the needs of older Australians,” said Ian Henschke.

TRANSPORT

National Seniors says a lack of public transport is leading to social isolation and a declining standard of living among older Australians.

Its policy document is therefore asking:

- for free travel on public transport for seniors at all times
- and an expansion of rail services into growth areas in the north and in Mt Barker, the Hills and Fleurieu regions.

HOUSING

Pensioners who rent are far more likely to live in poverty than those who own their home. That’s why National Seniors wants more state government assistance for older Australians struggling to get by because of the high cost of housing.

It is also calling for the provision of a minimum of 100 social housing dwellings a year.

“At a time when people should be enjoying their retirement, too many older Australians are worried about how they will pay for this week’s rent. These people need financial help so they can actually enjoy later life,” said Mr Henschke.

The full list of election priorities can be read here:

<https://nationalseniors.com.au/uploads/0320224021PAR-SA-ElectionPriorities.pdf>

To see what concessions are available for SA seniors, click here to use our concessions calculator:

<https://nationalseniors.com.au/concessions-calculator>

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