



Budget delivers for Health but neglects Home Care

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National Seniors Australia (NSA) has welcomed cost-of-living and health measures in tonight's Federal Budget but is disappointed the burgeoning home care wait list has been neglected.

NSA Chief Executive Officer Mr Chris Grice said the peak consumer body is pleased the budget aims to deliver **higher bulk billing rates, more affordable medicines, energy bill relief**, and *hopefully*, a freeze on **Age Pension deeming rates**.

"While there was a strong focus on aspects of the public health system, NSA is disappointed there was no funding to establish a Productivity Commission inquiry to address **rising premiums and out-of-pocket health costs in the private health system**," Mr Grice said.

"NSA is concerned there is no explicit reference to a continuation of a freeze on Age Pension deeming rates in the budget. If the freeze is lifted, part-pensioners will see a cut to their pension payment. We continue to call for this and a reset of the method used to calculate the rates in the future.

"While there is additional aged care funding, including funding for wage increases for nurses, NSA is disappointed there were no additional funds for **home care packages** to reduce the current wait list.

"While funding reform will increase access to home care in the future, we hope funds become available to reduce the 12 – 18-month wait list to three months as recommended by the Aged Care Royal Commission.

"We also welcome **investment in childcare** to help parents and grandparents who care for young children and grandchildren, especially those who also care for elderly parents.

"We welcome any **future tax cuts for workers**. These will be beneficial for older workers. NSA would have liked to have seen an exemption of income from the Age Pension Income test to encourage and support older people who need and want to stay in the workforce.

"With older people increasingly targeted by scammers, we welcome the **funding towards the National Anti-Scam Centre**. We would love to see a longer-term commitment to prevent and disrupt scammers.

"As we turn our attention to the Federal Election, seniors will be waiting to see what all parties and candidates put forward, before they cast their vote. With one-third of voters over 60, seniors' issues will be key to the outcome of the election."

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