

## Federal election 2019: Coalition policies for seniors

### Fix Pension Poverty

- Pension Work Bonus – expanded eligibility for the scheme to include self-employed and has increased the maximum annual pension exemption from \$6,500 to \$7,800 (this has already been legislated).
- Dental – will fund an adult program for low-income households, including pensioners, to receive dental through the public system.

### Address aged care deficiencies

- Research – will create the *Aged Care Workforce Research Centre* to examine new ways to deliver care for older Australians and training and education for aged care providers; will also create the *Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Research Mission* to improve quality of life of older people, enhance workforce capability and improve quality of care.
- Workforce – established the *Aged Care Workforce Industry Council* to address workforce issues within the aged care industry (its first meeting was in February 2019)
- Home care – will require providers to publish prices for administration and other changes in a new standardised schedule on My Aged Care from 1 July 2019.
- Aged care quality – established the *Quality and Safety Commission* in January 2019 combining the governance roles of the *Aged Care Complaints Commissioner* and the *Australian Aged Care Quality Agency*.
- Abuse – has begun work to establish a Serious Incident Response Scheme to review the protocols for responding to serious incidents, including assault of people in aged care.
- Dementia – will pilot innovative technologies to improve care for people living with dementia and establish specialist dementia care units in each Primary Health Network region.

### Maintain fairness in retirement incomes

- Dividend imputation – opposed to moves to remove franking credit refunds for self-funded retirees.
- Downsizing – enabled retirees to contribute up to \$300,000 to their superannuation from the proceeds of downsizing their home (this has already been legislated).
- Voluntary superannuation contributions – will remove the work test for voluntary superannuation contributions for people aged under 67.
- Self-Managed Super Funds – will extend the maximum size of self-managed superfunds from four to six members.
- Pension Loans Scheme – expanded eligibility for the scheme to include full pensioners and self-funded retirees and increased the amount of pension available (this has already been legislated).

### Arrest rising health costs

- Specialist fees – will develop a website to publish medical specialist fees to enable comparison and has committed to an education campaign to inform patient about the costs of specialist services.
- Private health insurance – created a requirement for private health insurers to categorise products (gold, silver, bronze or basic) and use standardised definitions to improve comparability of premiums, which will become mandatory from 1 April 2020.

- Chronic and complex care – will provide funding and a service model for GPs to provide enhanced care to patients aged 70 and over with chronic and complex conditions.
- Safety Net Threshold – will lower the PBS safety net threshold by 12 scripts for concession card holders and the equivalent of 2 scripts for non-concession card holders from 1 January 2020.
- Hospital funding – will provide extra funding for doctors, nurses and health service workers through the Commonwealth Health and Hospitals Program.
- MRI licences – will provide funding for 50 Medicare-eligible MRI licences across the country.
- Medicare rebates – will remove the Medicare freeze from 1 July 2020 (Labor will too).

### Protect pensioners from future rises in energy costs

- Energy assistance – will provide a one-off payment to income support recipients of \$75 for singles and \$62.50 for each eligible member of a couple (end of June 2019).
- Regulated price for electricity – will introduce the default market offer for electricity with regulated price (Labor will too).
- Electricity generation – providing financial support for the development of new electricity generation to increase competition and reliability (scheme already operating).
- Late payment fees – will ban late payment fees

### Improve Centrelink waiting times

- Staffing – employed 2,750 call centre workers.

### Protect older Australians from elder abuse

- Elder abuse plan – launched a National plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians (the National Plan) in March 2019 with timeframes for delivering reforms.