

Aged Care Quality and Safety

Dear

I'm a voter in your electorate and I'm writing to let you know that a key issue for me in the federal election is how Australia treats older Australians. I'm one of them and I will vote for the candidate that best enables me and other seniors to be safe and supported.

I am a member of National Seniors Australia. Through its advocacy and research, National Seniors fights to improve the lives of older Australians; older Australians just like me.

In this election, National Seniors is advocating for policies that reduce pension poverty, improve aged care, maintain fairness in retirement income, reduce energy and health costs, improve Centrelink and stop elder abuse.

Personally, I am most interested in fixing the aged care system.

I support National Seniors' campaign to improve access to aged care and their efforts to improve the safety and quality of aged care services. Like many people I am distraught by the failings of our aged care system as is being highlighted by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The 2019 federal election provides us with an opportunity to correct what is clearly a significant injustice. The health, safety, dignity and well-being of people relying on aged care are most important to me and I will vote for candidates who make these a top priority.

I am asking you to make a commitment to your constituents to champion the following recommendations from National Seniors.

Triple the number of level 3 and 4 home care packages.

The number of people applying for, and being assessed for, packages is outstripping supply resulting in unacceptable waiting times. Some 92,000 older Australians are waiting for level 3 and 4 packages. National Seniors continues to hear of cases where people on the waiting list died before they received any assistance.

Require all aged care providers to publish staff-to-resident ratios.

I am concerned about the number of staff, and their skills and qualifications, in residential aged care. It is clear to me that many of the problems encountered in residential care stem from the lack of quality care available to individuals. In choosing a home that provides adequate care there is no information available about this.

Providers should be required to make this information public. It would force them to improve quality and safety because people will have a better understanding of the quality of care in different care homes before choosing which one they will use.

Ensure all aged care staff in direct care roles have basic dementia training

I can't understand why staff caring for people with dementia aren't already required to be qualified in this important care area. Mandating dementia training would give me and other families peace of mind that staff can manage this condition properly.

It would improve awareness and understanding about dementia among carers, service providers and the general community.

I believe these initiatives will improve the care of older Australians and could also generate the economic benefit of reducing demand on taxpayer-funded services such as health.

I appreciate your time in reading this letter and welcome your reply.

Yours sincerely