

Health Costs

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 who best enables me and other seniors to access affordable health care.

I'm also 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 especially interested in reforms that put a brake on rising health care costs.

Spiralling out-of-pocket health care costs are the biggest concern of older Australians. National Seniors is calling for reforms that address this, enable older Australians to retain private health coverage and access the best possible medical services.

I will vote for candidates who support pensioners and I am asking you to make a commitment to champion the following recommendation from National Seniors.

Require all specialists to publish fees on a public register, and all GPs to make patients aware of choice when referring to a specialist.

Comparing and understanding medical specialist fees and services for hospital and out-of-hospital servicing is very difficult for most consumers. Providing consumers who need the services of a medical specialist with information about services and costs will help drive costs down.

This can be done by publishing all specialists' fees and requiring GPs to inform patients they do have a choice of specialists and not just the GP's recommendation.

Restrict private health insurance premium increases to no more than CPI.

Reform of the health care system is slow. Restricting premium increases to CPI, while ongoing reforms take hold will send a signal to the health sector that they must act to help to address spiraling costs. Doing so will stop policy holders from dropping their insurance or reducing their cover.

I believe these initiatives will help improve the health of older Australians.

These reforms will generate other economic benefits by reducing demand on taxpayer services such as those provided through the public health system.

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

Yours sincerely