

Energy 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 meet the rising cost of essentials.

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 most interested in policies that protect age pensioners from rising energy costs.

Energy prices have been increasing at rates far above inflation over the past 10 years. Those on low-incomes feel the impact of excessive cost increases hardest because energy makes up a larger proportion of their income.

Pensioners should be able to keep warm in winter and cool in summer, without negatively impacting their capacity to afford other essentials, such as food, clothing and shelter. Government has not done enough to put downward pressure on prices. Nor have they adequately compensated vulnerable consumers manage price pressures.

I support National Seniors' campaign to improve energy affordability. We fought and won a default market offer with a regulated price for electricity; for the retention of the Energy Supplement; and for a reduction in the Rate of Return for network providers.

However, there is still more that can be done. As someone who will vote for candidates who supports energy affordability, I am asking you to make a commitment to champion the following recommendation from National Seniors.

Reinstate indexation of the Energy Supplement

Without indexation, pensioners will see the value of the Energy Supplement diminish over time. Candidates in this election should commit to reintroducing indexation of the Energy Supplement in line with the energy component of CPI.

This will help low-income households meet rising energy costs and improve their overall health and wellbeing. Pensioners won't have to go without essentials such as heating and cooling in order to make ends meet.

Reindexing the Energy Supplement is fiscally prudent. It creates an incentive for government to act to keep energy prices low. When energy prices are contained, then so too is the cost of providing the supplement.

Also, this will provide productivity benefits to the whole economy as it will free up income that can be spent on other goods and services within the economy.

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

Yours sincerely