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National Seniors Australia welcomes new Ministry but calls for urgent action

National Seniors has called on the new Morrison Government to prioritise fixing Australia's ailing aged care system.

The leading seniors' advocacy organisation has said that action is needed now, with an interim report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety not due until October, and the final report in April 2020.

National Seniors' Chief Advocate, Ian Henschke, said a new Cabinet, new Minister for Seniors, and a new Labor leadership provided the opportunity for government and opposition to demonstrate the leadership Australians need and expect.

"Critical issues in aged care have already been exposed by the Royal Commission – at this point, all parties should get on with the job of fixing them immediately.

"We congratulate Scott Morrison on his success, his new cabinet and new Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians Senator, Richard Colbeck. We look forward to working with Senator Colbeck and others and urge him to make the disgraceful shortage of home care packages a top priority.

"As the Royal Commission heard, the problem and the fix are obvious – nearly 16,000 people died last year waiting for home care packages, and almost 130,000 people are still on the waiting list.

"The fix is to invest the \$2 billion to \$2.5 billion dollars annually in more home care packages, as estimated by the Health Department. Greater investment in home care will reduce costs in other parts of the aged care system because, without it, older Australians will be forced into more expensive residential care.

"The Royal Commission has uncovered appalling evidence of aged care failure and it is time for all parties to commit to action and explain to voters their plans and resourcing for fixing the system," he said.

Mr Henschke also welcomed the announcement of a review of Australia's retirement income system by the Treasurer.

"National Seniors has been calling for a comprehensive review of the retirement income system for many years. We hope that this will result in a simpler system that provides both an adequate safety net and rewards those who have saved for their retirement. The current system doesn't incentivise personal responsibility, and it doesn't meet the costs of associated with longer lives and changing needs.

"National Seniors stands ready to work with the Morrison Government and opposition parties to develop and action policies for older Australians. The young people of today are the older Australians of tomorrow. For too long, seniors' policies have been inadequate, stop-gap, and politicised. We can and must do better."

ENDS...

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National Seniors was established in 1976 and is the largest independent advocacy group for older Australians.

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