

# \*\*\*MEDIA RELEASE\*\*\*

## Report into older Australians shows Benefits of Labor's Social Inclusion Agenda.

Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion Senator Ursula Stephens has welcomed the report of the Senate Inquiry into Cost of Living Pressures on Older Australians as an important contribution to shaping the Federal Government's Social Inclusion Agenda.

The Senate Report, entitled "*A decent quality of life*", was the culmination of a six month enquiry initiated by Federal Labor into cost of living pressures on older Australians.

The inquiry heard evidence and submissions across the country from older Australians, peak organisations and government departments.

"The evidence and submissions demonstrate that the ability of older Australians to participate in the social life of the community is a key factor in their health, happiness and well being," Senator Stephens said.

"Those older Australians who are able to be active and involved in community life are happier and healthier.

"It is important for all of us to give senior citizens opportunities to participate and interact in the community they have spent their lives helping to build, and this is what the Federal Government's Social Inclusion Agenda will do," said Senator Stephens.

The report found:

- Of all Australians, seniors spend the least time socialising. 46% of older Australians live alone.
- Older Australians value a safe and stable home as it allows them to make connections with their local neighbourhood and provide a base for their social and community participation
- Increased cost of living pressures have been making it harder for older Australians to participate in the community life.

The inquiry also recognised the huge benefit that older Australians provide to their community through volunteering.

"Senior Citizens contribute an estimated \$39 billion to our economy by giving their time volunteering in a wide range of organisations, as well as caring for those in need." The report identified increases in the cost of living – particularly petrol prices – are affecting the ability of older Australians to volunteer their time.

"The Government's Volunteer Grants Program has been expanded to allow organisations to apply for funding to provide their volunteers with petrol vouchers and assist with other incidental costs. This will help them to offset their costs so they can continue their important work." Senator Stephens said.

[Click here](#) to download the "*A decent quality of life*" report.

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