



AUSTRALIAN SENATE

Sue Boyce
SENATOR FOR QUEENSLAND

9/4/2008

Dr Geoffrey Bird
Executive Director
COTA Over 50s Ltd
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Dear Dr Bird

Thanks for sending through a copy of your media release on the COLPOA report.

For the past few years, I have been grappling with the structure of our welfare system which requires individuals to "impoverish" themselves before offering assistance.

The tension between "a decent life" for all citizens and efficient use of the taxpayer funds seems to continue to increase. I would be very interested in any work/research that COTA has done in regard to the long-term effects of compulsory "impoverishment" or any other work in this area.

I also enclose a copy of my Media Release on the COLPOA report.

Yours sincerely

Senator Sue Boyce
Senator for Queensland

Enc: Copy of Media Release

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MEDIA RELEASE

Senator Sue Boyce

Liberal - Queensland

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20 MARCH 2008

Older Australians need pension certainty

The Government needs to urgently undertake economic modelling to set the pension rate at an adequate level for older Australians.

Senator Sue Boyce, Liberal Senator of Qld, a member of the Senate Community Affairs Committee, was speaking on the release of the Cost of Living Pressures on Older Australians (COLPOA) report, tabled in the Senate this morning.

The Committee hearing the inquiry into COLPOA, heard that the majority of older Australians are living quite comfortably, however there is a small but significant group who are falling behind, and are under stress.

"Many of them are single pensioners who don't own their own homes, especially single women," Senator Boyce said.

"I urge the Government to assist this group in making sure the single pension provides an adequate standard of living.

"We heard a number of very disturbing stories about some vulnerable people without food, and being pushed into homelessness.

"To establish the cost of raising a child, the Department of Human Services commissioned modelling that combined three different methodologies. The same process should be urgently applied to pensions," Senator Boyce said.

Senator Boyce urged the Government to follow through on the Committee's recommendations as soon as possible.

The Committee's recommendations include:

- the Government should review measures that will ensure a reasonable standard of living for older people, especially women, those on below average incomes, those who have lived with long-term chronic illnesses and those whose earning capacity has been greatly limited by their caring responsibilities,
- the Government consider financial initiatives to assist older people in continuing to contribute to the community as volunteers, and
- the Government monitor the usage and impact of older people accessing reverse mortgages and other similar products, including their effect on the eligibility of older people for government benefits and pensions.

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