



Margaret May MP

Shadow Minister for Ageing

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Swan Steals from Rich but Does not Give to Struggling Older Australians

Margaret May, Shadow Minister for Ageing said the 2008-09 Budget had confirmed her suspicions about the Rudd Government.

Margaret said: “For the past few months, we have had to put up with the Rudd Government continuously repeating the same lines “working families”, “the razor gang”, “getting the balance right” etc.

“But approximately six million Australians have got news for the Government which is that Australia does not comprise only of “working families”.

“It’s about time the Prime Minister got over his obsession with “working families” and governed for all Australians, paying particular attention to the frail and vulnerable.

“Pensioners living on an aged pension were overlooked in this Budget with no recognition for the struggles they are facing with rising grocery and petrol prices.

“Many pensioners do not have any discretionary income at all and the pension is falling short of meeting their basic needs.

“Pensioners are cutting back on the necessities of life, risking their health and wellbeing.

“The Government’s priorities do not include the frail and aged.

“It’s extraordinary that a cut to aged care funding was even on the table considering that 40% of providers are operating in the red.

“But at the eleventh hour, the Government did a last minute back-flip and have not cut funding to aged care – for now.

“The Conditional Adjustment Payment subsidy has increased by 1.75 per cent to 8.75 per cent of the basic aged care subsidy.

“The indexation is for a period of one year only and such a short time frame is not sustainable for elderly people and for those providers who provide that care to be subject to this level of uncertainty.

“The Government has also called for a Review of the Conditional Adjustment Payment but the terms of the Review are very limited in that they do not address the need to develop the funding formula to guarantee the future viability of the industry.

“It is important to have a Review but it should not be so narrow in its focus – it does not address issues such as recurrent funding and also the funding gap in high care.

“With Australia’s ageing population, it is important that this Review and the focus of the Review be on the future, particularly in light of the Intergenerational Report’s projections that living standards will fall with the ageing of our population.

“This is a typical Labor Budget – it increases taxes, massively increases spending, plays the politics of envy and shows that they don’t know what they are doing in running the economy.

“This Budget has written off older Australians and singles – it’s divisive and unjust.

“It’s also a short-sighted Budget that doesn’t address the biggest social challenge facing Australia and the world – our ageing population”, Margaret said.

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