



NEWS RELEASE

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FEDERAL BUDGET IN NEUTRAL FOR SENIORS – THE ELECTION AWAITS

“Apart from the very welcome National Health & Hospitals Network funding initiatives already announced in health care, seniors are neither major winners nor losers in this year’s Federal Budget” says Ian Yates, Chief Executive of COTA Australia, the peak organisation representing more than 500,000 older Australians.

“The major disappointment is that although the Budget delivers the aged care commitments promised as part of the NHHN, and additional funds for staff training and development, it has left aged care funding in a precarious state in 2010/11 while the government waits on the reports of the Productivity Commission Inquiry into aged care - not due until April 2011”

“The government should have provided bridging or interim increases in both residential and community care funding, which have fallen well short of cost increases and will continue to do so.

“COTA welcomes the continuation of stimulus funding to public housing, as seniors face a growing crisis in housing, but is disappointed there are no specific housing initiatives for seniors and no action on the Henry Review recommendations to assist low income private renters.

“Projected concessions on the first \$1,000 of interest earned by taxpayers, and the introduction of a \$500 and then \$1000 standard tax deduction, will result in a couple of thousand retirees becoming eligible for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, but the Budget has no new pluses for the millions of age pensioners.

“In health, initiatives to strengthen primary health care, introduce transportable electronic health records, and improve access to after hours GPs will all benefit seniors along with the rest of the community and are welcome.

“However the absence of any break-through on a dental care program or improved mental health services is very disappointing”

“These are claims we will now pursue from both parties in this years Federal Election”, Mr Yates said.

Further Information:

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