



the voice of older Australians

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MEDIA RELEASE MEDIA RELEASE

Work till you drop: Shameful call to increase retirement age to 75

COTA Over 50s has supported Combined Pensioners and Superannuants in condemning proposals to increase the age pension age to 75 by 2020.

"Governments should encourage and enable older Australians to remain attached to the workforce for as long as they wish," said COTA Over 50s Policy Chair, Bettine Heathcote. "But to compel people to stay at work by denying them access to the pension before 75 is both harsh and counterproductive. COTA Over 50s calls on the Prime Minister to immediately scotch such proposals, just as he did before the last election.

"I can imagine such a policy producing a dole queue of seventy year-olds", Ms Heathcote said. "It would swell the numbers of those receiving a Disability Support Pensions. These safety nets are even more stringent than the Age Pension, which everyone, including the Government, agrees is very inadequate.

"There are currently almost no restrictions on retirement age. People who want, and are able to work past 65 can do so. Many people who work in demanding, low paid jobs would find it extremely difficult to keep working into their mid-seventies. For people who have suffered injuries or are developing disabilities, it would be simply cruel to expect them to press on.

"Older people can and do contribute to their communities in a myriad of ways, not only through paid work. While removal of barriers to continued workforce participation in one's senior years is desirable, removal of the option to retire until you have put in fifty plus years of work is a contemptible idea."

COTA Over 50s regards the recent Budget initiatives, whilst insufficient to ensure a decent standard of living, to be a welcome first step. We welcome the current Review of Pensions as part of the Tax Review and look forward to policy proposals that are fair and sustainable and enable retired people to live healthy active lives.

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