



NEWS RELEASE

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COTA CALLS FOR MINISTER FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS

Australia's peak organisation for older Australians, COTA Australia (Council on the Ageing) has called on all political parties to commit to a Minister for Older Australians.

Releasing COTA's pre-election platform today, Chief Executive Mr Ian Yates said the new Ministerial position would demonstrate that the parties were taking older Australians seriously.

"It's time for our politicians to get serious about eliminating the many damaging impacts of ageism and promote the rights of older people," he said.

"ABS figures show that the number of older people in Australia increased by 168% over the past 20 years compared with total population growth of 30% for the same period – and that trend increases over the next 20 years.

"The Minister for Older Australians should be a Cabinet position responsible for:

- reviewing all current legislation to remove age discrimination
- overseeing older persons' impact statements on all new policy, programs and legislation
- creating a national public awareness campaign to change ageist attitudes
- making sure that service provision for older people actually meets their needs."

COTA Australia also wants both parties to create a full time Age Discrimination Commissioner with powers to enforce compliance with a strong Age Discrimination Act.

"The time has come to recognise that 'citizenship' and 'social inclusion' must be more than token words for the older generations of Australians who helped build this nation and still make major contributions to our society," he said.

Other issues that COTA wants to see action on in the next term of government include:

- Major aged care reform based on greater choice, more community care and financial sustainability
- A national dental and oral health scheme
- An older persons' preventative health program
- The removal of barriers to mature age employment and the creation of an older worker's advisory service.

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