

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mental health funding welcomed but more targeted support needed in State Budget

Council on the Ageing (COTA) SA has welcomed funding announced for a new 16-place acute mental health facility for older people in today's State Budget.

Chief executive for the peak body for over 50s, Jane Mussared, said the funding provides a long-term solution for a very vulnerable group of older South Australians.

"We are however disappointed that in this pre-election State Budget, when 50 percent of voters are aged over 50, there was not targeted support to address older unemployment, housing stress and a lack of transport options," Ms Mussared said.

"Older people will always support youth unemployment initiatives that will assist their grandchildren and greatgrandchildren into work.

"But it's equally important that the government supports employment initiatives that will help get older workers back into jobs.

"Thousands of older people face ageism every day in their job search. They have no clear pathway back to work and are left with the prospect of a premature and impoverished retirement."

With almost 10,000 older South Australians experiencing housing stress now, Ms Mussared said there's nothing in today's Budget that responds to this crisis and nothing that prevents an inevitable increase in coming years.

"We again ask the government to fund a specialised housing service for older people and prioritise them for public housing," she said.

"A growing number of older South Australians are spending half or more of their income on their rent alone."

Ms Mussared said through its Plan for Ageing Well, that the State Government has recognised the prevalence and damage caused by ageism.

"We are disappointed this has not led to funding to address systemic ageism which is fueling elder abuse, preventing older people getting jobs, and contributing to society's low

expectations around healthcare and aged care," she said.

COTA SA acknowledges initiatives that will be championed by public servants over the next 12 months.

These include an aged care plan for the Eyre and Far North local health network, alternate and improved pathways to hospital, a palliative care plan, the Retirement Villages Act review, and independent and affordable accommodation in Kimba.

Ms Mussared said that with as many as 8000 new aged care packages being provided to older South Australians in the next two years, the State Government will need to do more to ensure that there is a workforce ready to support these older people.

COTA SA is an older people's movement and the peak body representing the rights, interests and futures of more than 633,000 older South Australians aged over 50.

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