



Australian Conservatives

...a better way for South Australia

Jane Mussared
Chief Executive COTA
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7 March 2018

Dear Jane,

I write in response to your letter to the Australian Conservatives seeking our party's response to COTA's 2018 State Election Platform. The Australian Conservatives support the following:

- Developing options to avoid or limit long hospital stays;
- Investigating transport issues faced by older people including costly hospital parking, issues in getting to appointments with particular focus on regional and rural locations, public transport and associated costs with getting to appointments;
- Developing travel supports and options for older people needing to attend specialist services particularly those people needing to travel across the city or from country locations;
- Funding peer programs that build awareness of vital health interventions such as falls prevention and medication management;
- Extending access to appropriate physical fitness programs with particular focus being on provision in rural and regional areas;
- Conducting a review of the barriers to having an effective Advance Care Directives (ACD) including identifying issues surrounding the low uptake of ACDs;
- Developing a comprehensive housing strategy for disadvantaged older South Australians including giving consideration to age as a primary factor for accessing public housing and specialist services;
- Funding initiatives which address employment based age discrimination and ageism, including programs for upskilling for mature aged workers and providing mature age pathway programs;
- Increased support for older people living in rural and regional areas particularly in those areas with employment challenges;
- An inquiry into digital inclusion which would consider cost analysis of providing programs; the cost to business to provide paper bills free of charge, discussions with older people regarding the issues they face and any other relevant matter;

- An investigation into ways to encourage landlords to provide energy-efficient houses with an emphasis on equal benefit flowing to both the landlord and the tenant.

In addition to the support we have already given to COTA's 2018 Election Platform, Australian Conservatives make these further comments.

Health

Australian Conservatives remain greatly concerned with the lack of services in rural, regional and remote areas. We acknowledge the difficulties that people face when having to commute and the stress that being in foreign environments can cause. Accordingly we support strategies that would enable more primary care to be given close to home. We support further investigation and implementation of strategies which would limit long hospital stays and/or would prevent hospitalisation in the first instance.

Housing

Australian Conservatives support specialised service providers for older persons and support appropriate measures being taken with public housing to ensure that the physical design of the property aligns with the needs of the individual. We are acutely aware that the public housing system is under extreme strain and efforts are being made to ensure priority access for housing for those suffering domestic violence. Australian Conservatives support an inquiry into public housing which would assess such things as: the demand on the service; adequacy of service; ways in which people are matched to houses; audits of those in public houses such as the number of people living there and the number of rooms in the house, income; and considerations for priority access. We believe a comprehensive investigation into housing is necessary to best address community need and ensure that vulnerable persons are given adequate support.

Cost of Living

Australian Conservatives are concerned about the cost of living for all South Australians. Australian Conservatives give an in theory support to placing solar panels on public housing, however, we are mindful that such a project could only be feasible if the solar panels didn't require heavy and ongoing tax payer subsidies. We do not want to see any program implemented which would place a greater burden on other sectors of the community who cannot afford additional impost.

Australian Conservatives believe that most measures to reduce electricity costs are little more than Band-Aid solutions. We believe that a broader approach is necessary to fix our power supply.

Australian Conservatives have openly called for further investigation into our power supply to ensure that South Australia has the most reliable, efficient and cost-effective power in the country. This investigation would give consideration to the use of modern, efficient and environmentally friendly technologies such as HELE and nuclear power. We are over-reliant on costly power sources that are heavily subsidised by the taxpayer and do not provide an appropriate base load to the grid. Australian Conservatives would support an overhaul of our power systems which would greatly benefit older South Australians in terms of cost, efficiency and reliability.

Australian Conservatives support measures which can be taken to ensure that our older generations are well cared for and wherever possible, we will support measures to ensure their cost of living is minimal. Australian Conservatives recognise that our older and sometimes more vulnerable generations are frequently over-looked and it is certainly our intention to improve living conditions wherever possible. We are mindful to ensure that all options considered, don't adversely affect other parts of the community.

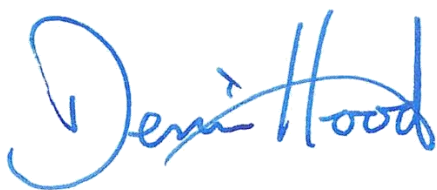
Additionally, reducing the cost to do business in South Australia, would have a flow on effect by stimulating the economy, increasing jobs, and by the lowering of taxes. Australian Conservatives have a costed plan which would allow for the abolition of numerous taxes including two of which are pertinent to older people: Stamp Duty and Land Tax. The abolition of these taxes would ultimately lead to cheaper and better housing options for older people who may want to downsize their home and move to a smaller more manageable location.

Elder Abuse

Australian Conservatives are devastated by reports of elder abuse and we support all measures which will protect and benefit older South Australians. We would support a legislated investigative powers including appropriate response measures to reports of abuse and harm of vulnerable persons. We also support establishing a national framework on elder abuse.

We trust that this has clarified our support for the COTA's 2018 State Election Platform. We certainly look forward to continuing our working relationship with COTA and welcome an opportunity to discuss these issues more thoroughly as we seek to act in the best interests of your community.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Dennis Hood MLC
State Parliamentary Leader
Australian Conservatives (SA)