



MEDIA RELEASE

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Budget with no bite: no dental for pensioners but aged care boost welcome

“Pensioners welcome health and aged care reforms but are disappointed that dental has once again missed the cut,” said Charmaine Crowe, CPSA Policy Coordinator.

Dental

“Treasurer Wayne Swan has done nothing to address dental for pensioners in this budget, despite the Rudd Government making an election pledge in 2007 to implement a national dental scheme. This is disappointing for the 650,000 people sitting on waiting lists for public dental. CPSA calls for dental, an essential part of primary care, to be included under Medicare.”

Tax cuts

“Pensioners will not benefit from the 50 per cent tax cut on bank savings because pensioners typically don’t pay tax. Very well off retirees and other tax payers are the only ones to stand to benefit from this tax measure.”

Home and community care

“The Government’s committed to taking over Home and Community Care (HACC) for older people, and they now need to put their money where their mouth is. The extra \$10 million for rural services is welcome, but is a drop in the ocean in terms of the amount required to address unmet need. HACC is chronically underfunded especially in NSW, where hours available for care and respite services fall well short of demand. As a result, older people are unnecessarily admitted into nursing homes, which incurs a far greater cost than HACC services would.”

Aged care complaints

“CPSA welcomes the extra funding for the Complaints Investigation Scheme and the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency. Complaints must be thoroughly investigated to give the community confidence that older people in our nursing homes will receive quality care.

“Aged care still lacks transparency though and publication of substantiated complaints against nursing homes must be a top priority. The benchmarking system to compare nursing homes is a step in the right direction.”

Aged care nurses

“The extra \$132 million for aged care nurses is a good start to improving staff shortages in aged care. However, residential aged care needs staff to resident ratios. We note that staffing levels and care will be explored over the next two years but it is clear that where there is inadequate staffing, quality of care goes downhill.”

Private renters

“The Henry Review recommended reform of Rent Assistance because it has failed to keep up with private rents. Rent Assistance is only indexed to CPI rather than market rents, eroding its value and pushing private renters an untenable situation. The Rudd Government’s investment in public housing has helped, but pensioners renting privately continue to pay in excess of 60% of their income on rent alone.”

Superannuation co-contribution

“CPSA objects to the decision to not return the Government’s super co-contribution to \$1.50 for every dollar voluntarily invested by low to middle income earners into their superannuation. Last year’s budget cut the co-contribution from \$1.50 to \$1 but this measure was only meant to be temporary. It is a set back for low income earners trying to boost their retirement savings.”

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