

GREY VOTE WILL COLOUR THIS ELECTION

DATE: Sunday, April 10 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Seniors Australia says this election announced by the Prime Minister today, will be the most important ever for older Australians.

The country's peak consumer and advocacy organisation for seniors is reminding all politicians that this is the first election since the Royal Commission into Aged Care, Quality and Safety made its findings and a real opportunity to "*let pensioners work*".

National Seniors Chief Advocate Ian Henschke says there is still a long way to go to address the woeful evidence of cruelty and neglect presented to the Royal Commission.

"The government responded to the Royal Commission with more than \$18 billion for the sector over four years and the next term of government will be make or break in terms of fixing aged care," Mr Henschke said.

"When Scott Morrison called the Royal Commission, he said he wanted to restore faith in the aged care system and Mr Albanese said in his budget reply that Labor will restore integrity and transparency in aged care.

"We want whoever wins to live up to their promises and we will hold them to those promises."

He also pointed to the fact that one in two voters in Australia is now 50 or over, meaning older Australians will have a big say in who forms the next government.

"Political parties will be judged on what they plan to do on a range of issues, not just aged care.

"We have been campaigning over the past few years on changing the aged pension rules to **let pensioners work** so that they don't lose their entitlements the minute they work more than one day a week.

"If it works overseas in countries such as New Zealand and Canada, why can't it work here?"

"We are asking political candidates of all persuasions to consider this life changing economic reform and whoever runs with it, will get a big tick from seniors," said Mr Henschke.

Currently any aged pensioners who choose to work whilst receiving the pension, lose 50 cents in the dollar of their income once their working week exceeds seven and a half hours.

National Seniors says allowing pensioners to earn more would see them pay more in income tax, handing the government more revenue, while also putting more money in the pockets of pensioners to spend in the economy.

It's cited research by Deloitte Access Economics which showed even a modest increase in older people in the workforce of five per cent would add almost \$48 billion to the economy in today's terms.

"It's a winning formula," says Mr Henschke.

"Pensioners win, because they have more money in their retirement, the government wins because it receives more revenue and we all win because it will help grow the economy.

"Who knows, it might even be an election winner!"

National Seniors wishes all candidates the best in the election and will be making regular comments and observations throughout the campaign.

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