

RESPECTING SENIORS

LABOR'S PLAN TO SUPPORT OLDER TERRITORIANS

Foreword



Labor respects our senior Territorians. From Arnhem Land to Kintore , Darwin to Alice Springs senior Territorians play an important role in family and community, in keeping traditions and building new ones and in making us a better place.

Labor believes that it is critical for the future of the Northern Territory that we keep seniors here.

Seniors continue to contribute to our economic growth. They have skills and talents we need to keep. They play an important role in the family with support for their children and grandchildren.

They contribute to our culture and our sense of who we are.

We will value their past contribution and their ongoing role in our community.

We will work hard to keep our seniors here- through help with the cost of living, better accommodation options and more opportunities to enjoy our lifestyle.

If elected, Labor will be a Government that respects seniors, works with them and supports their needs.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael".

Michael Gunner
Leader of the Opposition

COST OF LIVING CONCESSIONS.

Labor will reform the seniors concession scheme to provide more benefits to more senior Territorians.

In 2014 the CLP ceased seniors concessions to thousands of Territorians. The eligibility criteria for senior concession has been limited to Centrelink eligibility.

If elected to Government, Labor will work with seniors to restore concessions to the 3000 persons who now are cut from the scheme.

However, unlike the CLP, Labor will work with seniors and with organisations representing seniors to completely review and revamp seniors concessions and provide a modern pensioner concession scheme that reflects the needs of senior Territorians.

We will have this review completed prior to the first budget of a Labor Government.

SENIORS CONCESSIONS.

Labor will provide an additional \$2.1 million in senior's concessions.

The 3000 Territory seniors removed from the seniors concession scheme and, in the future, unable to access the concession scheme will be provided with a card every two years providing them with \$700 per person to be spent determined by them across areas including (but not limited to) travel, motor vehicle registration, and healthcare.

As part of Labor's review we will work with seniors already eligible for seniors concessions to determine whether the "debit card" may also be appropriate for them.

POWER AND WATER CONCESSIONS.

Labor believes that the CLP's removal of power and water concessions from all those not eligible under Centrelink rules is unfair to those superannuants on lower incomes.

It has also already had serious consequences for people living in retirement villages.

Labor will work to ensure that power and water concessions are available to seniors living in retirement villages regardless of the structure of the organisation running the village.

Labor will ask Treasury to immediately undertake a review of the number of people impacted and the options for providing support for lower income earners. This work will be presented prior to Labor's first budget.

BUS TRAVEL.

The CLP Government's decision to scrap free bus travel for senior Territorians was mean spirited. Territory Labor will re-establish free bus travel for senior Territorians in Alice Springs and Darwin.

HEALTH.

If elected, Labor will work with the Australian Government to expand the number of aged care beds to provide quality care in purpose built facilities which will in turn reduce bed block in our busy hospitals.

BETTER HOUSING OPTIONS.

We believe that the housing options for senior Territorians need to be improved.

Planning with the Sector

Labor will work with the private sector and key community groups to improve the housing options available for senior Territorians. We intend to bring the private sector, National Seniors NT Branch, COTA and the Government together to plan for clear opportunities for the development of better housing options right across the Territory.

Retirement Villages

Labor will work with the private sector to ensure a retirement village is built in the rural area.

Over the next five years we will also work with the private sector to provide a further retirement village in the inner city area.

As part of our remote housing strategy Labor will build granny flats for older remote Territorians in the existing housing lots and support a program of appropriate seniors housing on a community by community basis.

Regional towns are also poorly serviced by seniors housing options. Tennant Creek, Katherine and Alice Springs all need retirement village options. We will actively pursue their development as part of our regional plans.

AGE FRIENDLY PLANNING AND COMMUNITIES

Our planning approach will take into account the principle of age friendly development.

At a time when society is increasingly valuing agile technology, innovation and disruptive impacts on our economy we also need to be mindful of those people for whom these changes present difficulty. While many seniors are very “switched on” to new technology Government agencies, in their own planning, need to be aware that alternatives need to be found for people who have not connected.

ELDER ABUSE.

The issue of elder abuse is a silent menace in our community.

Older Territorians are often not able to access the advice they need to ensure they can resist the efforts of others to take control of their lives away from them.

Labor will:

- provide funding for coordinated assistance to senior Territorians who are suffering from elder abuse;
- Identify key positions across key government agencies such as the Department of Justice, Consumer Affairs, Health Department and the non-government sector that will be responsible for coordinating responses to elder abuse issues;

These people will be identified as being part of an elder abuse task force across government and will be trained in handling the issues involved in elder abuse.

- Fund a position in the non-government sector to be able to promote information to seniors on these matters and responsible for bringing together the taskforce on a regular basis to ensure coordination and to report on issues arising.

SENIORS IN THE WORK PLACE.

Labor will undertake a project with the Commissioner for Public Employment that looks at retaining ageing workers in the public sector, the ways such workers can continue to contribute, and flexible working arrangements.

This project will be funded by Government and conducted by NT COTA.