

SUPPORT BUILDS FOR NEW MINISTER FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS

2 July 2024

National Seniors Australia (NSA) is supporting Federal Member for Mayo, Ms Rebekah Sharkie’s call for government to establish a new portfolio and Minister for Older Australians, similar to the Minister for Youth, the Minister for Women, and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

The Private Members Motion follows a meeting last year with the Prime Minister during which Ms Sharkie together with the Hon Bob Katter MP, and NSA, discussed the needs and value of older Australians being managed by a new Minister for Older Australians.

“The number of people aged 65+ is expected to grow by 2.35 million by 2041, and those aged 85+ expected to grow by almost 750,000 over the same time. We need to plan for this impact and opportunity now,” NSA Chief Executive Officer, Mr Chris Grice said.

“Aged care is just one of the many issues facing older Australians. Many also experience ageism, barriers to mature age employment, elder abuse, poverty, and homelessness.

“There is also a misconception older Australians are living well off high inflation. However, pressures from rising private health insurance costs and out-of-pocket expenses, rising living costs including rent, fuel, and grocery increases erode most of these gains. Representation is about creating a voice for their concerns and needs to be heard.

“Representation is also about ensuring the social, physical, and economic contribution of older Australians whether it be through paid or volunteer work, caring for grandchildren, mentoring, financially assisting with HECS, school fees, and first mortgages etc is recognised and valued.

“Importantly, as Ms Sharkie has expressed, it’s an opportunity to change the narrative around older Australians – to view them as the builders they have the potential to be, rather than the burden they are too often portrayed.

“NSA thanks Ms Sharkie for once again shining a light on this growing population and supports her call for a Minister for Older Australians.

“This is an ideal and timely opportunity for government to demonstrate its support – to give millions of older Australians the voice and respect they deserve – a rightful seat at the table.”

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