

The Hon. Bill Shorten MP
Leader of the Opposition

cc. The Hon. Julie Collins
Shadow Minister for Ageing

1 May 2019

Dear Mr Shorten,

Will you lead on aged care?

We write to ask you to share your vision for Aged Care with the electorate. We find the lack of such a vision to date from both major parties alarming. With less than three weeks to go in this election campaign, we have still to see a concrete commitment to ensure all older Australians get the care they need when they need it, regardless of who they are, where they live, and their personal circumstances. Nor has there been any serious election commitment to support aged care workers, despite them being the key to quality care, and a widely acclaimed workforce strategy sitting waiting for implementation.

We are calling on you to commit your party to specific, systemic and sustainable reform of aged care as part of this election campaign.

The Anglicare Australia Network believes that our society must first and foremost offer a dignified life for all. We cannot achieve this vision if we do not value our elderly, or if we fail to understand and embrace the notion that an investment in their care is an investment in us all.

As proud members of the National Aged Care Alliance, we call upon you to embrace the solutions the Alliance offers to achieve a sustainable, fair and quality aged care system.

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These actions are detailed in the NACA election position paper, but in brief are to:

- Urgently increase funding for home care so that all Australians waiting for care receive it when they need it, at the right level to match their needs.
- Introduce a sustainable funding model that supports all older Australians to improve their health and wellbeing, regardless of whether care is provided in a home, community or residential care setting.
- Fund additional support for older Australians who are more vulnerable due to their low income, rural location, disability or other circumstances, so that they receive the same quality of aged care as everyone else
- Simplify the aged care system so it is easier for people to understand, access, and provide more help to navigate the system for people who need it.
- Commit to funding the aged care workforce strategy, delivering more staff and an appropriate skill mix that ensures holistic quality care for older Australians
- Ensure all people in residential aged care have access to health services such as specialist care and mental health services, allied health, general practitioner and dental health services.

We recognise that we are in the midst of a Royal Commission into aged care. The issues and failings it is documenting are not new or surprising to those who work in the sector, or to any Australian who has had to navigate the system.

Many of the solutions to fixing the system are also well-known. Many of them having been recommended for years. Using this Royal Commission to stall action in this area is unnecessary and short sighted. There are more than 100,000 elderly Australians desperately waiting for care to help them stay at home and lead their best life and it is unacceptable for them to wait any longer.

Before they vote, Australians deserve to understand what your commitment is to them as they age, to their elderly parents, and to the health and happiness of our communities overall. We urgently await your response.

Yours sincerely



Kasy Chambers
Executive Director
Anglicare Australia