



Dear Friends,

COTA Tasmania represents the interests of all older Tasmanians, focusing on policy issues from the perspective of older people as citizens and seeking to champion the rights and interest of its constituents.

We support and promote the right for older people to be fully involved in our society. In the case of the federal election, we want to ensure that all older people are aware of the federal policies that will benefit them.

COTA believes the impacts of ageism, based on negative assumptions and values are brought about and are sustained by negating the true value of older people as contributors to our society.

This Saturday you will once again stand at the ballot box and make a decision about who you think is fit to lead Australia.

We have analysed the ageing and aged related policies of the three parties against our election platform which includes combating ageism, aged care reform, health and older people and employment.

COTA Tasmania recognises that making a political decision is the core principle of democracy. The right to choose a political belief is a foundation of our society. Today in Australia there are numerous political parties including the Nationals, Labor, Liberal, One Nation, Greens, Family First and many more. Politicians and political parties constantly change and so do our own ideologies.

Australia was the first country to allow women to stand in elections and Julia Gillard is the first woman to be Prime Minister. This election will decide whether she becomes the first elected woman Prime Minister of Australia.

As the decision is not always easy or straightforward, we are providing you with this special edition in order to inform you about just what each federal party's policies offer. It is my hope that this simple policy breakdown will assist you in making an informed decision about who should lead our country into the future.

It is imperative to us at COTA Tas that you, as one of the 14,030,528 Australians voting at this Saturday's federal election, make your vote count where it can benefit you the most.

So how does each party measure up?

Maxine Griffiths, AM,
Chief Executive Officer

**COTA (Tas)
2 St John's Avenue
New Town,
Tasmania
7008**

**(03) 6228 1897
www.cotatas.org.au**

"For an inclusive community which values, supports and recognises the contribution of all older people."

Labour party:

Employment- Over 30,000 pensioners will benefit from improvements to the Pension Bonus Scheme. This means they keep the entirety of the first \$250 they earn per fortnight. A banking system will assist seasonal workers by only claiming the \$250 when they actually earn it. This could mean a benefit of over \$6000 per year. The 'Experience Plus' program will introduce training grants of up to \$4000 for people over 50 enabling them to enhance their skills and stay at work.
Age Discrimination- A full time Age Discrimination Commissioner.
Aged Care reform- No new policies to date.
Income security- No new policies other than for employment.
Health- No new policies.
Other policies- Increase consumer protection for reverse mortgages providing extra information for older Australians. Support to Grandparent Carers via a Peer Support program.

Liberal party:

Employment- Employer subsidy of \$3250 will encourage employers to take on workers over 50.
Age Discrimination- no specific policy but will appoint a Minister for Ageing and Seniors.
Aged care reform- To restore the 1.75 per cent care subsidy for residential care. Funding for convalescent care and programs to support people with dementia. Additional funding for respite care. \$14million over 4 years for pet visiting programs for older people in residential care.
Income security- Abolish Superannuation Guarantee levy contributions age limit as from July 2013. Indexation of income thresholds for the Commonwealth Senior's Health Card.
Health- No specific aged related initiatives.
Other Policies- Declare 2012 as the Year of Meals on Wheels. Grants Programme for Pet Therapy in Aged Care Facilities. \$12million funding Companionship programme for grants to community organisations to increase volunteer involvement in aged care facilities.

Greens:

Employment- No specific policy initiative.
Age Discrimination- No specific policies.
Age Care reform- Increase the number of places for aged care and retirement living. Ensure that appropriate aged care services are provided for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Increase funding to enhance nursing numbers, their salaries and conditions.
Income security- Increase the age pension. Improve income support and tax options.
Health- Reinstate the Commonwealth Dental Health Program to provide free public dental care for older people on low incomes.
Other Policies- Establish a funded scheme to undertake minor home renovations and installation of communication technologies to enable older people to remain in their own homes.

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How do these policies measure up against COTA Australia's election platform?

Aged care:

Older Australians want increased choice in how their care and support needs are met now, and into the future. Our next Federal Government must do more than tinker around the edges with short term funding fixes to residential care. A key message from consumers and older people is to increase availability of community care with access to a suite of support packages managed and controlled by consumers. We need real reform!

We welcome the intention of both major parties to seriously consider the recommendations made by the productivity Commission's Inquiry into Aged Care.

Employment:

Older Australians want to exercise their choice to work as they age. The critical steps needed are to remove barriers which push older workers away from the workforce. Older people want guidance and support to navigate the employment maze and to venture into new and exciting areas. Older Australians want the choice to work after 65 years in meaningful and rewarding jobs.

Health:

We must remain as healthy as possible for as long as possible. A well funded Older Person Preventative Health Strategy is needed in order to get a positive health message out to all older Australians. We need to focus on the obvious triggers of chronic disease such as alcohol, tobacco and obesity. Mental health for older Australians is an increasing issue and we need to come together to discuss the issues facing our communities and families. We must have a listening ear in Canberra which will then act upon what it finds. Older Australian's on low incomes need access to a federally funded Dental and Oral Health Scheme which covers preventative education and treatments. Dementia is the largest cause of disability burden in older people and a significant contributor to health costs across the nation. COTA calls for major investment in research into the causes of dementia, and support for preventative measures.

Ageism and age discrimination:

We need to promote the rights of older people in Australia and work towards changing negative community attitudes to reduce and eliminate discrimination against older people. A cabinet Minister for Older Australians and an Age Discrimination Commissioner in the Australian Human Rights Commission would go a long way in putting older people as the focus in service provision, policy development, communities and media.

"For an inclusive community which values, supports and recognises the contribution of all older people."

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COTA TASMANIA SURVEY

COTA Tasmania is currently conducting a survey on ageing and the community. To participate in the survey visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/98BQWQL>.

With your help we can have a stronger voice to effect change across Tasmania.

Council On The Ageing (Tas) Inc

ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name of Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Website: _____

Number of members _____ clients _____ residents _____

Contact Person: _____

Position: _____

Address (if different from above) _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Membership Category

Annual Fees are due by 1 July each year (Amounts are GST inc)

Please tick your organisation type:

Full year (July to June)

- \$20 Senior's Clubs
- \$55 Consumer / Peak Organisations
- \$110 Service Providers & Government Agencies

Half year (Jan to June)

- \$10 Senior's Clubs
- \$27.50 Consumer / Peak Organisations
- \$55 Service Providers & Government Agencies

**For consideration by the Board,
please complete & send to:**

COTA (Tas), 2 St Johns Avenue, New Town Tas 7008

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If you would like to add or remove your name to the COTA Tas newsletter mailing list, please email admin@cotatas.org.au with "subscribe" or "unsubscribe" in the subject line.