

OLDER AUSTRALIANS, AGED CARE AND CARERS

Family First believes older Australians have a wealth of knowledge and experience, which deserves to be valued and respected as playing a vital role in the formation of new generations. As such, Family First will work to foster the full participation of seniors in Australian families, communities and society by

- Supporting initiatives that reward the mentoring of younger Australians in the areas of life skills, family and work skills
- Supporting initiatives to raise the status and value of the contribution of older Australians in society, communities, families and the workplace through educational strategies and incentive structures
- Encouraging programs that integrate the elderly into society through flexible options for paid and voluntary work, mentoring and social activities and recreation
- Address the needs of Older Australians with Carer responsibilities as a matter of urgency.

Family First will fight for better strategies to address the health of the aged by:

- Ensuring the provision of appropriate care that promotes healthier ageing in place (their home) and improved quality of care during the latter stages of life.
- Restoring choice about participation in the workforce at a level that is commensurate with the needs and desires of each older person.
- Establishing programs to place older persons into positions of mentoring or advising for business, government or community organisations where the perspective of a long life well lived can be a valuable contribution

Family First recognises that there are significant problems in the Aged Care Sector and will act to improve the levels of funding and address structural problems within the Aged Care Sector.

The Party will work to establish greater security and safety in the care of the frail aged through provision of greater choice in housing and nursing home choice and improved standards within Aged Care Facilities

Accordingly Family First will support funding for the expansion and upgrading of accommodation options including nursing home options.

Family First will support funding to be directed to the provision of appropriate supported and nursing home accommodation to younger Australians who have substantial disabilities or chronic health problems who are unable to continue living in their homes or when support structures in the community are no longer sufficient to ensure their safety and comfort.

The Party will seek to promote improved funding for services and support including nursing support that will assist in allowing frail aged and other disabled persons to remain safely and comfortably in their homes and communities both during times of acute need such as after hospital discharge and routinely.

In this way, Family First recognises that appropriate provision of suitable accommodation and support structures will reduce pressure on hospital beds and enhance quality of life for those who are frail or disabled.

Family First will address the neglect of Carers and their dependants, including older carers.

The Party believes that, family members are the best placed to care for those of their family suffering disability, illness, injury or frailty and that the family environment is the best place for this family care. Families provide both short term care or support of family members who are recovering after a hospital

stay or illness and the longer term care of the family member who is dependent or needing support because they are frail, aged or disabled intellectually or physically through birth or accident or because of chronic illness including mental illness,

The priorities for Family First are to address the needs of Older Australians with Carer responsibilities as a matter of urgency:

- Family First recognises that there many older Australians who are carrying caring responsibilities into old age and often with inadequate financial resources.
- Older carers are typically caring for their own spouses and children disabled through injury or illness or their grandchildren, as result of family breakdown and parental illness, death or substance abuse. They are faced with diminishing physical and financial resources. Family First will promote improved resources in terms of social security funding and other practical support to carers.
- The Party will support social worker or case manager support for all ageing carers to provide increasing levels of assistance in managing the demands of their caring responsibilities as their capacity to provide appropriate care begins to decline.

Family First recognises that the day to day burdens faced by many carers are onerous and often overwhelming. Carers and their families including dependants need to have a full and rewarding life and not just manage or get by.

Family First affirms the right of carers and dependants to have a full life with realistic opportunities for social, recreational, creative and work participation as far as is possible and desired. In view of this objective, Family First will promote policy to:

- Have Carers allocated Social Workers or Case Managers who can provide support, practical assistance, organisational assistance and referral to services.
- Family First will support a substantial increase in funding to the Home and Community Carers Scheme.
- Family First will support increased levels of funding to support and assist carers and families of mentally ill persons in particular.
- Family First wants the carers in these situations to be freed from the burden of organising services and benefits.
- Family First wants to reduce the complexity of welfare payments and service delivery.
- Family First wants to enhance the choice and flexibility of carers in making decisions about balancing work and care obligations so as to enhance the capacity of carers to participate in the workforce and maintain career path “traction”.
- Family First will support measures that provide better financial support and assistance to carers who contribute significant cost savings to the community by their caring activities. Accordingly a review of carer allowance that fully acknowledges the value of these services to the community will be promoted.
- Family First will promote substantial improvements to funding for provision of adequate respite care both day and residential on a regular and frequent basis as well as on ad hoc basis for family holidays or appointments, sickness or other needs of carers and their families.
- Family First recognises that significantly or intellectually disabled people require meaningful work, social interaction and opportunities for recreation and creative expression. Therefore Family First will support improved funding to support expansion of day care programs to achieve these ends and also recognise that this will greatly assist in relieving the burden on carers.
- Family First recognises that many aging carers are worried about the future of their spouse, or disabled child or grandchild.

Therefore we will promote improved provision of long term supported accommodation for those with disabilities. This accommodation should be modelled on family house hold life, promote the dignity of each resident and provide opportunities for a full life. This type of accommodation must be provided throughout the community and in regional areas so that family members may still be able to maintain strong connections and meaningful and frequent contact.

- Family First will support substantial funding to boost support and services for those suffering mental illness and their families