

STAYING IN PORTARLINGTON

Good news for older people in the May Federal Budget

A number of measures in May's Budget are very positive for ageing people who wish to stay in their own homes:

- Funding which will add 34,000 new Level 3 and 4 Home Care packages over the next four years – an increase of 86% which will make a big difference given that across Australia, more than 60,000 people waiting for a package.
- The other really big change is to dramatically expand access to the Pension Loan scheme to everyone over pension age, and to increase the maximum fortnightly income to 150% of the Age Pension rate. This will allow older people to access their home equity to supplement retirement income, pay for extra aged care, undertake home modifications, and other needs.

Australia's leading seniors' advocacy organisation, COTA Australia, has welcomed these and other changes in a Budget which targets older Australians. These two measures, especially, recognise the importance of independence and quality of life as we age.

COTA Australia Chief Executive Ian Yates said these initiatives will make a significant difference to the lives of many. He said that "Being supported to age at home is the clear preference of older people in need of regular support in their daily lives and critical to their physical and mental well-being."

For more information go to <https://cotavic.org.au>

Some facts and figures about ageing in Victoria (provided by COTA Victoria):

- 31% of people in regional and rural Victoria are 60+, a rate 8% higher than in Melbourne.
- More than 20% - one in five - of Victoria's population are aged 60+
- 41% of Victorians 65+, and 46% of 85+, were born overseas – so we need to recognise our diversity
- People over 65 account for 60% of population growth outside our state capitals (2010-15)
- Only 5% of older people live in residential aged care facilities, and there are more people waiting for aged care in the home packages than actually receiving them
- 35% of people 65-74 do voluntary and community work

These factors show clearly that older people are important in our communities, and that they have clear needs that our governments must address.

SiP is very mindful that all of the above have an obvious impact on life in Portarlington.

Planning ahead

SiP is having a short interval in our meeting schedule over winter, but we will be back in action soon.

Meanwhile, plan ahead for the **annual SiP outing in October**, as part of the Geelong Seniors 'Festival. Details will appear in next month's Port Report.

To contact SiP –

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