

Media Release

July 28, 201



Fairness and decency for Australians – including older Australians

Prime Minister Julia Gillard today said she joined the Labor Party because she believed in fairness and decency for Australians, including older Australians.

Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) CEO Greg Mundy said older Australians who depend on aged care services might beg to differ. “We are now well into the second week of the election campaign and the government has not announced its policy for aged care,” Mr Mundy said.

“Ms Gillard stressed that she questioned the government’s ability to deliver pension increases. Some 60 per cent of aged care providers are questioning if they can continue to deliver services in the face of inadequate funding, most of which comes from the federal government.

“The financial and regulatory system governing aged care services has locked providers in a time warp when it comes to funding and the ability to deliver a range of services older people want and need.

“We hope the Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care will deliver real options for reform early next year so there is at least some hope of planning for the next generation of older Australians. “They will come to nothing if the Government does not make a commitment to make the reforms a reality should it be elected to serve a second term.

“Until then, providers of residential and community care, and the people who depend on them, need an assurance that additional funding will be provided immediately to match the cost of delivering services.”

Mr Mundy said it was important to note that Ms Gillard had denied saying “old people never vote for us”. “There are more than 2.6 million people aged over 65 on the electoral roll and it’s hard to imagine they all have the same voting preferences,” he said.

“Ms Gillard’s commitment to supporting “older Australians who find it tough to make ends meet” is encouraging but of little comfort to those looking for residential aged care where there is none, or a very long waiting list; it is of little comfort for those missing out on care and support because there aren’t enough aged care workers.

“Fairness and decency for older Australians should include having choice and access to care and support when and where it is needed and for that to occur, a properly funded and regulated aged care system is necessary.”

Mr Mundy said the Liberal Opposition had not announced its policy on aged care either. “Will there be a Coalition policy on aged care which demonstrates fairness and decency for older Australians?”

Aged and Community Services Australia is the national peak body representing not-for-profit and faith-based organisations providing residential and community aged care services.

Media contact: Chris Hornsey 0419 513 432