

MEDIA RELEASE

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Senate decision a win for older Territorians as Government urged to reconsider private health insurance rebate cuts

COTA NT has welcomed the Senate's decision to block the Federal Government's proposed cuts to the private health insurance rebate, describing it as an important win for older Australians, including older Territorians facing rising living costs.

Senators from across the chamber supported a motion to remove the Bill from the Senate's agenda, following concerns raised by older Australians about the potential impact on household budgets and access to affordable healthcare.

COTA NT CEO Sue Shearer said the decision sent a clear message that the financial pressures facing older people must be taken seriously.

"Many older Territorians are already struggling with the cost of living, including rising grocery bills, housing costs, utilities and out-of-pocket healthcare expenses," Ms Shearer said.

"For people on a pension or a fixed income, private health insurance can be a significant household expense. Any changes that make cover less affordable risk forcing people to make difficult choices between maintaining their insurance and paying for everyday essentials.

"We welcome the Senate's decision and urge the Federal Government to listen to the concerns raised by older Australians before considering any further changes."

Research by COTA Australia found that the proposed rebate changes could have a significant impact on older people, with one in three respondents indicating they would cancel or change their private health insurance cover. Ms Shearer said this raised concerns not only for individuals and families, but also for the stretched public health system.

COTA NT also rejected the suggestion that older Australians should have to choose between affordable private health insurance and a properly funded aged care system.

"Both are essential. Older Territorians should not have to sacrifice their access to healthcare to make ends meet, nor should aged care funding be framed as competing with the need for affordable health insurance," Ms Shearer said.

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COTA Northern Territory is the peak advocacy and representation organisation for senior Territorians advocating for and working towards an age-friendly, just, inclusive and equitable society since 1969

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