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Labor launch a missed opportunity on aged care while Independents speak up

Leading Age Services Australia (LASA), the voice of aged care, says the Labor Party's federal election campaign launch yesterday was a lost opportunity for the party to show its commitment to aged care.

LASA CEO Sean Rooney says making the system better should be a priority for all political parties and candidates, but so far the major parties have been largely silent on the critical issues that need to be addressed.

He said by contrast, the policies of key Independents, including Helen Haines (Indi), Rebekha Sharkey (Mayo) and Dr Kerryn Phelps (Wentworth) showed they understand the importance of aged care in their communities.

"To better meet the needs of older Australians and to create an aged care system that supports ageing well we need to:

- fix the funding emergency in residential care and commit to ensuring funding meets the growing costs of delivering high quality care
- fix the unacceptable impact on older Australians by legislating maximum wait times of no more than three months for home care services
- invest in workforce growth and development
- have a minister for older Australians and aged care in Cabinet and develop a comprehensive national ageing well strategy

"LASA stands ready to work with the next government of Australia to ensure these issues are addressed as a priority to achieve a sustainable and world class aged care system.

"Older Australians and those that care for them deserve real vision and commitment from the next government of this country.

"While the Royal Commission is underway, we must not lose sight of making the aged care system better right now, by addressing the key issues of access to services, funding of services, quality of services and supporting the workforce that delivers these services."

Mr Rooney was speaking at LASA's NSW/ACT Conference in Sydney, where the Independent Member for the Sydney seat of Wentworth Dr Kerryn Phelps outlined her priorities for aged care.

"Like the AMA I believe that Australia's ageing population will require an increasing amount of medical support due to an increase in the prevalence of chronic, complex medical disorders," Dr Phelps said.

"The aged care system must be adequately resourced so older people are able to access the same level and quality of medical care as other people.

"Care for older people in the appropriate environment is a basic human right. The consequences of care in an inappropriate environment have implications for the wider healthcare system, including avoidable hospitalisations and excessive health costs.

"Older people should have the same choice of medical care as the rest of the population, including choice in medical practitioner,"

Mr Rooney urged aged care providers, their staff, clients and local communities to take part in a national day of action on Tuesday 14 May to let their local candidates know that aged care is an issue of national importance.

Read more about the "*I Care for Aged Care*" campaign here: <https://lasa.asn.au/federal-election-2019/>

About Leading Age Services Australia (LASA)

LASA is the national peak body representing and supporting providers of age services across residential care, home care and retirement living. Our purpose is to enable a high performing, respected, and sustainable age services industry delivering accessible, affordable, quality care and services for older Australians.

We represent providers of age services of all types and sizes located across Australia's metropolitan, regional and rural areas. Consistent with the overall industry profile, 57% of our Members are not-for-profit providers, 33% are for-profit providers and 10% are government providers.

Our diverse and representative membership gives LASA the ability to speak with credibility and authority on issues of importance to older Australians and the age services industry.

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