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MEDIA RELEASE

PRIME MINISTER'S BROKEN PROMISE WON'T BE FORGOTTEN

Dr Annette Barbetti said today that many former Government employees and retired Defence personnel expressed their anger with the Government last night when they flooded ABC TV's Q&A website with criticism and questions about their betrayal by Kevin Rudd who promised them fair pension indexation prior to the election. Program compere Tony Jones said that thousands had emailed his program expressing their concerns.

The 300,000 retirees dependent on these pensions receive a pension that averages less than the combined married rate of Age Pension. Their pensions are indexed by the Consumer Price Index which the former Government rightly discarded as the sole means of indexing other Government funded pensions more than a decade ago.

During the election campaign Kevin Rudd and his Labor colleagues sent letters and emails to many of these people right around Australia promising fair pension indexation if Labor won office, which undoubtedly swayed many voters Dr Barbetti said. These people know that their pensions have increased by only half the percentage of other Government funded retirees' pensions over the last twenty years. They are rightly saying that they are being treated as second class Australians. All they want is to have their standard of living maintain parity with that of other Australians, which is not asking for special treatment, only the fairness that Kevin Rudd promised all Australians prior to the election.

Dr Barbetti said that the Government's unreserved acceptance of a lone actuary's free advice not to change their existing pension indexation arrangements flew in the face of the recommendations of twenty nine Senators who were involved in three separate Senate Inquiries, all recommending a wage-based index. Three of those Senators are current Ministers including Senator Nick Sherry, the Assistant Treasurer and Penny Wong, the Climate Change Minister.

Many thousands of those affected live in marginal seats right around Australia Dr Barbetti emphasised. About 10,000 live in the election litmus-test seat of Eden-Monaro which Labor's Mike Kelly won in the last election. Dr Barbetti said that despite Dr Kelly's best efforts to have the Government do the right thing, his senior colleagues seem intent on continuing to discriminate against these senior Australians. Those affected have developed and implemented successive Governments' policies, or as members of the Defence Force have been prepared to put their lives on the line to protect Australia and what it stands for.

What the Government obviously forgets is that these people have good memories. Based on the strength of feeling they are currently displaying Dr Barbetti believes that the Government will undoubtedly regret Kevin Rudd's broken promise of a fair go.

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