

MEDIA RELEASE - 1 November 2007



Candidates in the Hot Seat

At a series of 4 public meetings across Canberra and Queanbeyan in the last week, about 650 military and public service pensioners had the opportunity to quiz Coalition, ALP, Greens and Independent candidates about what they are doing to stop the erosion of retirees' pensions because of inadequate CPI indexation. The meetings were organized by the Superannuated Commonwealth Officers Association (SCOA) and the Defence Force Welfare Association (DFWA).

The meetings were made aware of the large numbers of Commonwealth retirees in many marginal seats across the country.

The meetings noted that Kerry Tucker, the ACT Senate candidate for The Greens, was able to commit Greens support for fairer indexation as it applies to other Government funded pensions. The meetings expressed disappointment, sometimes in strong terms, that the Liberal's ACT Senator Gary Humphries and the ALP's Bob McMullan MP and ACT Senator Kate Lundy and ALP candidates Peter Conway (ACT Senate) and Col Mike Kelly (Eden-Monaro) were unable to do more than express their personal support for higher indexation.

Many at the meetings pointed out that the personal support of the Coalition and ALP candidates on this issue has not changed since the last election but nothing practical has been achieved by them. That led several attendees to question whether there would be any point in voting for the major parties.

Eden-Monaro's sitting Liberal member, Gary Nairn, was unable to attend the Queanbeyan meeting but sent a letter stating that the Government considers that CPI indexation is adequate, a position which annoyed many at that meeting given Mr Nairn's previous public support on this issue.

In the interest of equity, the meetings called upon the major parties to commit to maintaining the relative value of Commonwealth retirement pensions by indexing them at the same rate as is used for other Commonwealth pensions, ie the higher of CPI and MTAWWE.

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