



PRESS STATEMENT 2 November 2007

GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION MUST ANSWER THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF OLDER AUSTRALIANS

The Prime Minister, Mr Howard recently stated, "There has been no group in the country that is feeling a greater degree of financial pressure than pensioners".

In a response to his promises to older Australians, COTA Over 50s rejected the Coalition's offer of \$8:00 per week as grossly inadequate. COTA Over 50s called upon an increase of \$25.00 per week (or 65% of the couple rate) for single pensioners as a first step in recognizing the real cost of living for those on pensions.

"A single pensioner cannot exist on \$269 per week, particularly if they are paying rent" say Dr Bird, Executive Director of COTA Over 50s. It is more expensive to live alone than with another person, so why do single pensioners continue to be disadvantaged".

"COTA Over 50s' response to Mr Howard was shared with the Labor Party in the hope that Labor would not offer a "me too" promise. Unfortunately for older Australians, especially the single aged pensioner, that is exactly what has happened.

"As a second step, COTA Over 50s is calling for an urgent review of the adequacy of the aged pension with an immediate interim offer of \$1,000 per annum to continue until the review outcomes are implemented.

"The Grey vote moved by 5% following Mr Howard's announcement. With 6 million over 50's in Australia, our voice needs to be heard.

For more information:

Dr Geoffrey Bird, Executive Director, COTA Over 50s, Tel 0409 705 951

Copies are available on www.cotaover50s.org.au