

More details on health reforms needed

Older Australians have stressed the need for more information on how Local Hospital Networks will deliver the Government's health reforms. Commenting on the reforms announced by the Prime Minister this week, National Seniors chief executive Michael O'Neill said the majority of hospital patients are over 55. "Seniors welcome any move to introduce national standards, make hospitals more efficient and improve patient outcomes. We hope these reforms deliver real improvements, such as shorter waiting times for patients," he said. "The government has focused on the creation of Local Hospital Networks as a key part of delivering its health reforms. More information is needed on how these networks will work to ensure they can deliver the promised improvements for patients," O'Neill said. "It should also be remembered that hospitals are only one part of the healthcare picture and reform is also needed in other parts of healthcare including aged care, dentistry, mental health and rural services."

Important superannuation review survey

National Seniors Australia has developed a survey that gives you the chance to have your say on superannuation. Super reform is a priority issue for NSA and the data collected from this survey will be used to inform NSA's submission to the Government's Review of the Australia's Superannuation System (known as the Cooper Review). The survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete and will be open for two weeks. To participate go to www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB22A8TJ87EDC If you have any problems accessing the link email npo@nationalseniors.com.au or call 02 6230 4588.

Time to counter negative attitudes

National Seniors is calling on the Government to launch a campaign to counter negative attitudes toward older Australians. Earlier this week a Deakin University survey found that some Australians see the elderly as a burden on society. Chief executive Michael O'Neill said the time had come for the Government to take the lead in dispelling these negative attitudes. "Rather than being a burden on society many older Australians continue to contribute to the country's economy," he said. "Older Australians working full-time make an economic contribution of \$59.6 billion a year to Australian Gross Domestic Product and older Australians contribute \$4.8 billion alone in unpaid childcare and give help to people with a disability. "Despite this, negative attitudes like those reported in the survey still exist and can lead to discrimination against older Australians. It is one reason why many seniors who want to work cannot find jobs and the country loses \$10.8 billion a year by not using their skills and experience," he said. "If the government wants to make the most of Australia's ageing population it should launch a public education and awareness campaign to dispel the negative attitudes that exist towards older Australians," O'Neill said.

Seniors' myki roll-out delayed

Seniors have welcomed the Victorian Transport Ticketing Authority's decision to hold back on the distribution of free myki cards to Victorian seniors so that an easier transition can take place when the system is ready. The TTA has announced that the mail out of myki cards to 400,000 seniors has been rescheduled to begin when myki is fully operational on all of Melbourne's public transport. National Seniors Victorian state manager Arnold Bates welcomed the moves by the TTA. "We are glad that the TTA has listened to the concerns of seniors and not rushed through with a plan that isn't fully ready," Bates said. "There are a few glitches in the current system, for example, many seniors don't have internet access or credit cards for online

top ups which makes it hard for them to top up their card easily," he said. "They want a simple system where can they go to a retailer and top up their card by using cash."

Telemarketer scare campaign a scam

A scam email is circulating the internet claiming that people's mobile phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies and people will be charged if they receive a call from one of these telemarketers. Concerned National Seniors members have contacted NSA after receiving the emails. The Australian Communications and Media Authority is aware of the email being circulated and has advised that the email is a hoax which originated in North America. The reference to mobiles being charged for incoming calls makes reference to the system in the USA, but does not apply to Australia. In Australia telemarketers are already permitted to call mobile phones but they are unable to charge you for that call. If you are concerned about being contacted by telemarketers you can list your Australian fixed line and mobile numbers on the Government's Do Not Call Register. Telemarketers who contact numbers listed on this register may be in breach of legislation and can face a penalty. To add your number to the register phone 1300 792 958 or register online at www.donotcall.gov.au.

International Women's Day

The global theme for this year's International Women's Day (IWD) on 8 March is "Equal rights, equal opportunities: progress for all". IWD is a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women. It is a day when women are recognised for their achievements, without regards for divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political. Different states in Australia are choosing their own theme to raise awareness of the issues affecting women here and overseas. The United Nations Development Fund for Women in Australia is raising funds to empower women migrant workers in Indonesia. To find out about events in your area go to www.internationalwomensday.com and click on "Events" and then "Australia".