15 May 2022

Jonathon Smithers
CEO
Arthritis Foundation of Australia
PO Box 550
Broadway NSW 2007

Dear Mr Smithers

I write in reply to your letter of 28 April to the Hon Mark Butler MP about the Arthritis Australia 2022 Election platform.

Almost 3.6 million Australians have arthritis – it is one of the more common debilitating conditions faced in our country. Arthritis can have a profound impact on a person's quality of life due to the chronic pain and physical limitations it imposes, and the mental health impacts of the ongoing management of the condition.

All Australians deserve access to universal, prompt, and world class medical care, and the treatments that they need to stay healthy and lead happy and fulfilling lives, including the treatment of arthritis.

Labor does not want to see any Australian held back by living with debilitating pain. We remain committed to ensuring our health system gives people the best possible chance to live pain free and independent lives.

But it won't be easy. Over the decade that the Liberals have been in Government, it has become harder to see a doctor, and costs more. The Liberals' attacks and neglect means that primary care is in crisis, particularly in outer suburbs and regional and rural communities.

Labor has announced that it will establish a Strengthening Medicare Fund, to deliver better access and care for patients, with a commitment of $750 million over the forward estimates to deliver improved patient access to General Practice, including after hours; improved patient access to GP led multidisciplinary team care; and better management of complex and chronic conditions.

More details of this policy, and the rest of Labor's health policies can be found here.

Labor's Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing is aware of Arthritis Australia's 2022 Election Platform, and if elected to Government will engage with Arthritis Australia and other relevant stakeholders about the detailed proposals contained in the platform.

Kind regards,

Labor HQ 22