



# Push for aged services not bearing fruit

## HINDMARSH

PIA AKERMAN

WHEN Tony Abbott dropped into a Glenelg cafe last week, 83-year-old Barbara Hays and her 85-year-old cousin Doreen Gaskin politely told reporters they were happy to meet the Opposition Leader while enjoying their daily coffee.

But the rush of the campaign trail meant they did not get a chance to speak with him about their concerns, primarily the lack of attention to pensioners' needs.

"It would have been nice if he could have stopped to talk," said Mrs Hays, a widow and undecided voter in the western Adelaide seat of Hindmarsh. "Neither side has said much about what they'll do for pensioners.

"It's a bit hard to live on \$500 a fortnight after rent when you're on your own."

With Hindmarsh among the greyest electorates in the country,

Mrs Hays's sentiments may reflect a broader mood among aged voters there, with the potential to threaten Labor's 5.1 per cent margin.

People over 50 who have watched their superannuation savings go backward under the ALP as the cost of living increases, could form part of an anti-government backlash, though sitting Labor member Steve Georganas has maintained strong local popularity, particularly among the electorate's Greek community.

"It's a marginal seat and anything could happen," Mr Georganas said.

"I certainly don't take it for granted."

A poll taken one week after Julia Gillard became Prime Minister gave Mr Georganas 56 per cent of the two-party-preferred vote over his Liberal challenger, Jasmine Wood.

Figures released yesterday by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show welfare recipients are under growing financial pressure, with

the cost of living increasing by 3.3 per cent for age pensioners over the past year and 4.2 per cent for other welfare recipients, compared with the generic CPI increase of 3 per cent.

Neither Mr Georganas, nor Ms Wood specifically nominated the pension or aged issues when asked what Hindmarsh voters cared about the most.

Ms Wood said people she spoke to nominated the cost of living for families as their main issue.

"People are also very concerned about water security in South Australia," she said

Council on the Aging chief executive Ian Yates said the major parties were well-matched on seniors' issues, "but they haven't done enough".

"The missing piece on both sides has been health," he said. "The biggest complaint that we get is around lack of a dental scheme, because if you're a pensioner you just cannot afford private health insurance."



KELLY BARNES

Labor member for Hindmarsh Steve Georganas

### HINDMARSH, SA

**Where:**

Inner western Adelaide

**Held by:** Steve Georganas for Labor since 2004

**Lib candidate:** Small business owner Jasmine Wood

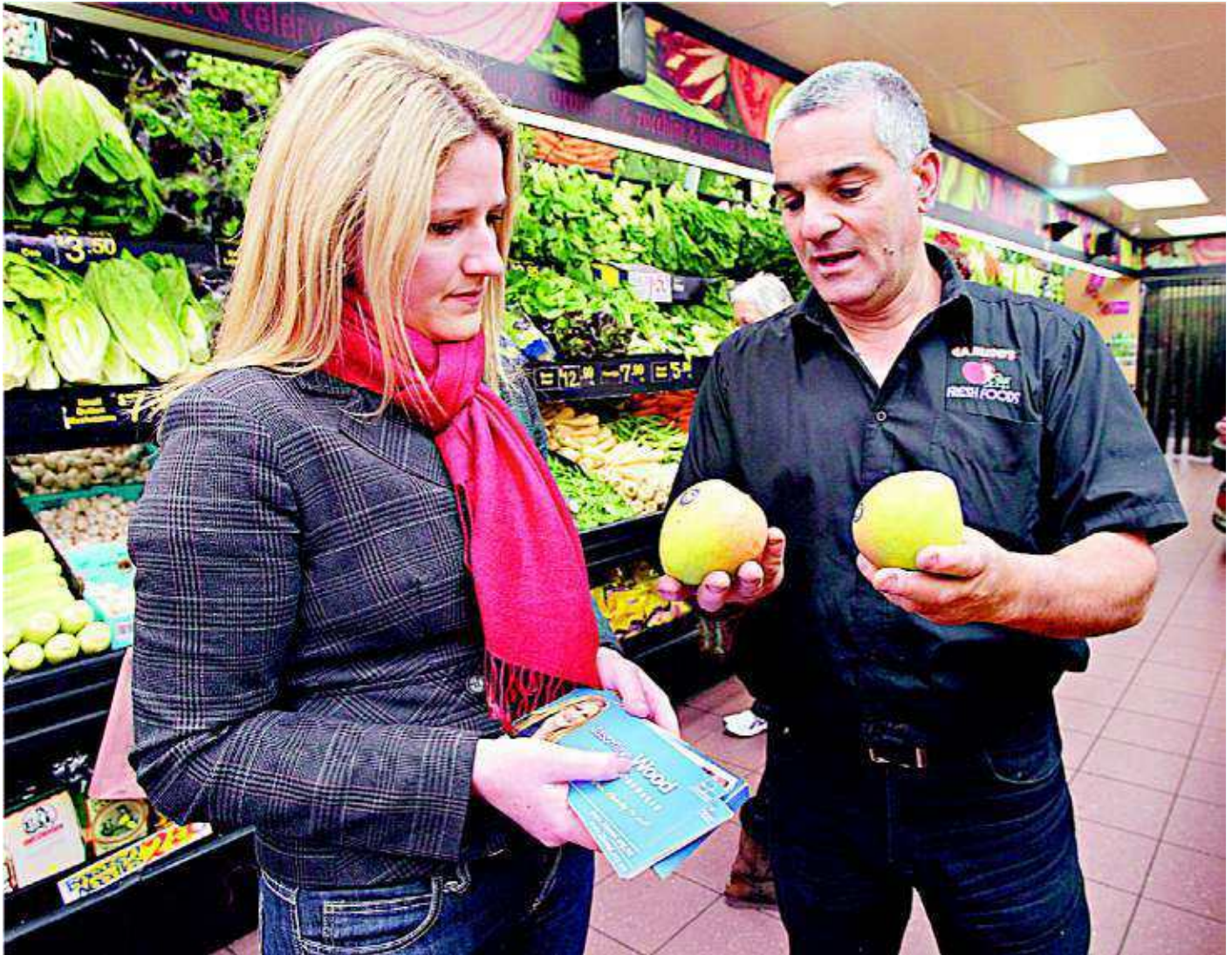
**Average weekly family income:** \$1149

**Unemployment rate:** 4.7%

**Swing to change hands:** 5.1%

**Swing factor:** Cost of living pressures, especially among the over-65s (20% of the seat's population compared with a national average of 13%) concerned about their super nest eggs





Liberal candidate for the federal seat of Hindmarsh Jasmine Wood with Nino Braiotta of Caruso's Fresh Foods at Glenelg, last week