

School handout rejected

Eilidh Sproul-Mellis

The Albanese government is facing renewed calls from the Greens to cut back on “government largesse” for Catholic and independent schools, as a new survey reveals nearly a third of private school parents believe they shouldn’t receive any public money at all.

More than three in five NSW parents believe the way public and private schools are funded is unfair, new polling commissioned by the Greens shows, with a quarter of those surveyed “strongly agreeing” that the system is designed to benefit wealthier families.

The nationwide study questioned just over 1000 public and private school parents, with kids in kindergarten to year 12, in August last year.

It found most families want greater restrictions on how private schools operate when receiving taxpayer dollars.

When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement “private schools that receive government money should not be able to charge fees”, 69 per cent of NSW respondents agreed, of which 28 per cent of “strongly” agreed.

Greens education spokeswoman Senator Penny Allman-Payne said the government has “no excuse” to delay full funding of public schools.

Shock price for old ring

Fraudster Melissa Caddick’s engagement ring is being sold by a Blue Mountains antique shop for 10 times the price it was bought for at auction just over a year ago.

The solitaire diamond ring, given to Ms Caddick by her husband, Anthony Koletti, is for sale at Jewellery Library in Blackheath with a price tag of \$70,200. The ring was last traded for \$7000 in 2022.



Senator Allman-Payne

Other dementia carers a lifeline for Gabrielle



Leopold’s Gabrielle Robertson cares for her husband, Andrew, who has dementia. Picture: Alison Wynd

‘It’s so exhausting thinking for two people all the time’

Tamara McDonald

Gabrielle Robertson began to notice her husband’s memory faltering around the start of 2020.

While the Leopold resident was working as a night shift nurse, Andrew was retired and in charge of paying bills.

But Mrs Robertson, 69, noticed some were getting missed and others paid twice.

Mr Robertson, 72, was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and vascular dementia at the end of 2020. He has deteriorated further since then.

Mrs Robertson said in addition to memory issues, he could become fearful and confused, and was unable to carry out tasks that were once second nature, like preparing meals and driving.

Taking his medication can take up to five minutes, but would once have taken seconds.

“You don’t want to take control out of everything in their lives as it still gives them purpose,” Mrs Robertson said.

While he used to do woodwork, now Mr Robertson doesn’t recognise the function of his tools, his wife said.

Mr Robertson, a former mill operator at Alcoa, shares three children and two grandkids with his wife, who is his full-time carer.

Mrs Robertson, who is now retired from nursing, said while caring for her husband was rewarding, it could also be isolating.

They have recently acquired a package that will see them get some in-home support.

And the duo, who have been married since 1976, attended a

free Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS) dementia support group, which Mrs Robertson said had been terrific.

Mrs Robertson had been able to relate to other carers and learn from them.

“It’s so exhausting thinking for two people all the time – we all feel that,” she said.

“I’ve got some tools in my tool belt for later on (in the journey).”

“It was somewhere for me to go where it was safe, supported and educational, with other people and carers there that were in the same boat.”

Mariana Azar, AMCS respite centre project co-ordinator Geelong, said the dementia wellbeing program empowered carers and provided them with the skills required to support them in their caring role.

Small group sessions are designed for both the carer and the person diagnosed with dementia.

In these sessions, carers received support and educational resources, along with the chance to exchange experiences and ideas.

Personalised activities are tailored to the preferences of those with dementia.

The aim is to improve personal wellbeing, alleviate stress, and provide people diagnosed with dementia a tailored care plan that helps them remain in their homes for as long as possible.

“We are here to support one another, laugh together and know that we are never alone,” Ms Azar said.

For details on the dementia wellbeing program, contact sah@amcservices.org.au

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