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## **‘Uncomfortable’ with MPs’ super? Then change it! - Andren**

Labor Shadow Treasurer, Mark Latham’s comments that he is “uncomfortable” with MPs’ over-generous superannuation, and Democrats’ Senator John Cherry joining the push to overhaul the system are welcome developments, according to Peter Andren, Member for Calare.

“I’ve been a ‘voice in the wilderness’ in calling for MPs to have the same superannuation system as everybody else and it’s good to finally see some movement within the major parties,” Mr Andren said.

“The current retirement allowance for MPs is out-of-date, over-generous and over-protected. It’s about time more MPs began to question it, because their constituents certainly are.

“I commend Senator Cherry and the Democrats for preparing a private members bill on MPs’ super, and I’ll be re-introducing my own *Parliamentary Choice of Superannuation* bill when parliament resumes.

“The latest available annual report to MPs on their scheme puts the nominal employer contribution at 69.4%, in comparison to the 9% minimum contribution for everyone else in the real world.

“The parliamentary scheme should be fully funded or scrapped altogether. Until the unlikely event of that happening, any member who objects to the current scheme should be free to make his or her own super arrangements, with an employer (the Commonwealth) contribution no larger what anyone else gets.

“Senator Cherry is right when he points to ‘time serving’ MPs waiting to collect the full benefit which, after 18 years service, at 75% of the annual salary currently gives a lifetime pension of some \$75,000.

“Even short timers can pick up a 50% pension if they win two elections but lose their third, or lose pre-selection. The system currently rewards non-performing MPs to the tune of \$50,000 per year, but that goes up in line with pay increases for sitting MPs.

“The old argument was that the MPs superannuation scheme made up for their poor pay, compared to what they might earn in the private sector. But, factor in the electorate allowance, travel allowance and study tours, car, home and mobile phone, printing and postage allowances – politicians are now doing just fine.

“I say to Mr Latham: don’t endure the discomfort, change the system, and connect politicians with the voters by at least giving MPs the same ‘choice of superannuation’ as everyone else,” Mr Andren said.

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