

**January 24, 2017**

## **ACSA says dementia care costs need to be factored into sustainable, future funding**

Aged & Community Services Australia welcomed new research into dementia care for the insight it offers into the considerable costs of caring for older Australians living with dementia in residential aged care in Australia.

Flinders University researchers revealed it costs approximately AU\$88,000 a year to provide health and residential care for a person living with dementia in Australia.

“By presenting a comprehensive study of 541 people living with dementia and their care needs, this research provides a clearer understanding of the cost of meeting those needs particularly when it comes to the complex healthcare needs of the many older Australians in residential care living with dementia.”

“With rates of dementia predicted to double by 2050, and one-in-three Australians born today eventually facing a dementia diagnosis, we need to be sure that future funding for aged care is sustainable and ensures that as a community we are able to tackle the enormous social and economic challenge of dementia into the future.”

Aged & Community Services Australia recently used its pre-Budget submission to urge for Government to consider reforms to funding to migrate the aged care sector to a more sustainable and stable footing into the future.

Ms. Sparrow said the Flinders University study provides valuable detail on the per person cost of caring for those with dementia, and contributes to a fuller understanding of the future needs of the sector:

“Research like this is invaluable for future service planning in our industry,” she said. “Combined with studies like the Residential Aged Care Resource Utilisation and Classification study underway at the University of Wollongong, and a clearer sense of the cost of future service planning for dementia patients is emerging.”

“The figures contained in this survey underscore just how acute the funding needs will become over time if the government, and the community at large, fail to address the financial sustainability of the sector,” said Ms. Sparrow.

“Research like this should become part of a conversation about community expectations for services and support for people living with dementia and how those expectations can be met now and in the future.”

“Now is the time to secure the funding mix that will allow the sector to adequately care for older Australians with dementia as the age.

“Part of that is ensuring they have the same access to health services as they age and their primary health needs change.

“Surveys like this contribute to growing our understanding of the scale of the societal and economic challenge posed by a growing population of older Australians living with dementia.

“It is now up to the government to heed the lessons research like this provides.”

~ENDS~

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