



BAPTIST CARE AUSTRALIA



2 October, 2018

Peaks welcome extra CHSP funds but urges more support for high level home care packages

Aged & Community Services Australia along with leading not-for-profit aged care peak bodies said today's announcement of an additional \$100 million over two years for the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) is a welcome development in home care provision but more must be done for older Australians waiting for long periods for home care services.

Today's announcement comes on the heels of Government releasing the latest Home Care Packages data which shows a growing number of older Australians with high care needs still without the vital home care services they require.

"We welcome the funds allocated through the CHSP for important additional services like domestic assistance, meal deliveries, transport and home maintenance but we remain alarmed at the number of people on a waiting list for a Home Care Package (HCP)," said Pat Sparrow, CEO of ACSA.

"Data for the fourth-quarter 2017-18 shows the number of people on a waiting list for a Home Care Package (HCP) has grown to over 121,000 people, including 40,000 people assessed as needing a level four package but who have been assigned a lower level package than they require. Those people, and others who are waiting without any support, have the highest need levels but are waiting more than a year for a Level 3 or Level 4 package to enable them to live safely in their own homes," said Wendy Rocks, Managing Director of Lutheran Aged Care Albury.

In addition, it is still not clear how current funding commitments will meet the projected need of about 140,000 HCPs by 2021/22 – an extra 66,000 packages.

"There remains a large group of older Australians whose needs are quite simply not being met – and who are at a time of life when they simply cannot afford to wait. The government must act now to address that," said Kasy Chambers, Executive Director of Anglicare Australia.

In 2015, the Government announced its intention to bring the CHSP and CHP programs together. The group continues to support an integrated system to provide care at home, tailored to the range of support needs and goals of older people:

"There are many ways in which CHSP and the Packages program contribute to older Australians being able to stay at home for longer. CHSP must continue to perform its function offering lower level home supports that promote a person's capabilities to live safely in the community, and not merely become a funding stop-gap for HCP," said Claerwen Little, National Director of UnitingCare Australia.

"In working towards full integration in 2020, we need to ensure these two programs are working well now so that no one misses out on the care they need," said Marcia Balzer, Executive Director of Baptist Care Australia.

“Access to the right home care when it is needed supports the choice of older people to remain at home and will limit moves to residential aged care or admissions to hospitals, ultimately saving costs for individuals and across the health and aged care systems,” said Paul Sadler, spokesperson for Presbyterian Care Australia.

In urging immediate action on home care, the group recommends:

- A recommitment to, and action on, the integration of the Commonwealth Home Support Program and the Home Care Packages Program to give older Australians an end to end home care system supporting both low and higher-level needs as and when individuals require support;
- Increasing investment in home care, including immediately releasing more HCPs, in particular more level 3 and 4 HCPs, to directly reduce the number of clients waiting for care and support;
- Ensuring adequate resourcing of a skilled, integrated assessment service to ensure people are assessed at the level of support they need in a way that maintains as much independence as possible;
- Reducing the wait time for commencement of support services for those on the waitlist by:
 - Supporting individuals to understand and make decisions about the home care they require, especially people from special needs groups including Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, Indigenous and homeless people;
 - Reducing the decision-making period for activating a HCP from 56 to 28 days; and
 - Reviewing “unspent funds” to ensure maximum use of available funds to support individual’s needs.
 - Removing consumer cost incentives to remain under the CHSP program, which is intended to provide entry level services, not substitute for HCPs.

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