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Funding Specialist Dementia Care Units a small piece of the puzzle

Not-for-profit provider peak body Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) said the Coalition's intention to spend \$7.5 million on Specialist Dementia Care Units was welcome, but was a drop in the ocean compared to the proposed \$1.2 billion 2016/17 Budget cut to aged care funding.

ACSA CEO Adj Prof John Kelly said the units, part of ACSA's election platform for aged care, are an essential step in seeking to support people with severe symptoms of dementia.

"Indeed, establishment of specialist units which are deemed to be highly effective in treating severe behaviours caused by dementia, were incorporated in a recommendation from the 2014 Ministerial Dementia Forum," Prof Kelly said.

"However, while any initiative that will improve the lives of old, frail Australians is welcome, we remind all candidates that the allocation of \$7.5 million does little to compensate for the \$1.2 billion stripped from aged care funding in the last Budget. There should be sufficient funds to provide quality care to all residents with dementia.

"The providers who care for and support more than a million older Australians every day want the next government of Australia to halt the impact of these cuts and undertake a genuine consultative review of the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI)."

ACSA is also calling for a transition fund to assist providers through the significant reforms which will see more older Australians receiving aged care support in their own homes; and the finalisation of a National Aged Services Workforce Strategy.

"After a life time of working and contributing to government coffers, old, frail Australians should not be denied the care and support they need," Prof Kelly said.

"Funding to help us understand more about dementia and support communities and people living with dementia is vital.

"Equally, having the workforce and services available when and where older people need them, has to be part a national comprehensive plan for the future."

For more on ACSA's federal election campaign and what the cuts will mean for elderly Australians visit www.agedcare.org.au/acsa-federal-campaign www.facebook.com/ACSACampaign2016

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