

MEDIA RELEASE



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Carers can benefit from some increased investment in home care packages

Carers Australia believes that tonight's Federal Budget goes some way to improving access to home care packages for the aged and those who care for them.

CEO of Carers Australia, Ara Cresswell, said, "Carers Australia has been concerned for some time that caps on the number of home care packages and the adequacy of funding within them, especially for those requiring the highest level of support, have produced an inequitable system placing incredible strain on family and friends providing care for aged people at home.

"The long delays and unpredictability in accessing packages can place intolerable pressures on carers' health and emotional wellbeing and may force them to make the heart-breaking decision that their aged parent or partner will need to be moved into residential care.

"Many carers will also need to take time off work, time away from their families or pay for private services out of their own pocket while they wait for an adequate level of home care to be allocated.

"While the addition of 20,000 new home care packages is welcome, there are said to be more than 100,000 aged people who have been approved still in the queue waiting for their first package, or in desperate need of an upgrade because their condition has deteriorated to a point where they need more support at home if they are to stay out of residential care," said Ms Cresswell.

"Our understanding is that people may wait about six months for a Level Two package and about a year for a Level Three or Four package.

"More paid support is likely to diminish but not remove the need for daily, ongoing support provided by unpaid carers.



“In cases where carers are dealing with challenging behaviours accompanying advanced dementia or providing a high degree of physical or emotional support to an aged person with severe disability or chronic illness, carers will still need support in their own right.

“In particular, the shortage of respite or replacement care to allow carers to take a break needs to be addressed.

“We are hoping that the current review of the Aged Care Financing Authority, which is due to report in August, will be able to identify improved funding and arrangements for the provision of respite care to address this problem.”

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