

MEDIA RELEASE



26 November 2019

Toward better provision of aged care needs

Carers Australia welcomes the Government's early response to the preliminary recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

"As has been amply highlighted through the interim report of the Commission, the shortage of Home Care Packages, and particularly the availability of packages at higher assessed level of need, has resulted in insupportable waiting times for aged Australians to receive the assistance they require to remain in their own homes", said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

"In many cases waiting times of many months and even well over a year have contributed to an inevitable and often irreversible decline in their level of health and disability.

"It has also taken its toll on family carers who in some cases will be contending with the strains of ageing themselves and in other cases may have to give up employment to fill the gap in promised paid care.

"The additional 10,000 Home Care Packages announced yesterday is very welcome, but it's not yet clear the extent to which this increase will reduce waiting times for packages to be delivered at the assessed level of need."

Carers Australia also welcomes the additional funding for medication management programs to address the over-use of chemical restraints, such as anti-psychotics and benzodiazepines, to subdue the behaviours of aged care residents; often with appalling consequences to their quality of life and health.

"The proliferation of inappropriate uses of chemical restraints has been known for some time. However, the often anguished testimonies of family members before the Commission have brought the problem into sharp public focus," said Ms Cresswell.

"We hope the additional \$10 million to fund dementia training for aged care workers and providers will contribute to alternative approaches to managing patient behaviour.

"We are also pleased that the program will focus on the prescription of these medicines for use in the home. Carers Australia had been advocating for some years that medication management can be a source of real stress for family carers, especially when appropriateness of use and the prospects for medication misadventure are not properly explained to them."

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