

Media Release



Carers Australia is the national peak body for carers. Our vision is an Australia that values and supports the contribution that carers make both to the people they care for and to the community as a whole.

4 February 2015

Increased support for people suffering severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia will benefit carers

Carers Australia welcomes Assistant Minister Fifield's announcement that the government will use the remaining \$54.5 million from the over-subscribed and now defunct Dementia Supplement to provide support to residential aged care providers through mobile teams of clinical experts, which will assist residents experiencing severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (known as BPSD).

These Severe Behaviour Response Teams (SBRTs) will also work closely with the existing Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Services (DBMAS) in each state and territory whose role includes improving the capacity of family carers to respond to BPSD.

"The psychological and physical strain of caring for someone with advanced dementia – especially if they become aggressive, suffer severe mood swings and become extremely disoriented – can be totally overwhelming for family and friend carers," said Ara Cresswell, CEO of Carers Australia.

"Families and friends are also likely to become extremely distressed when they witness the people they have shared their lives with falling victim to the more extreme manifestations of dementia in aged care facilities.

"Carers will clearly benefit from any program which will assist in the provision of better practice dementia care in both residential and home care settings and assist with the remediation of BPSD.

"We also welcome Assistant Minister Fifield's announcement that the Government will conduct an analysis of existing dementia programs during the first half of 2015 with the aim of improving their coordination, integration and effectiveness," said Ms Cresswell.

"We would hope and expect that Carers Australia, along with other consumer representatives, would be closely involved with this initiative, and that it will include a focus on improving the skills and wellbeing of carers."

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