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ACSA CEO: Government must act on funding reforms to ease home care pressure

The peak body for not-for-profit aged care providers, Aged & Community Services Australia, is calling on the government to consider reforms to tackle the increasing number of older Australians waiting to access appropriate home care.

Echoing sentiments expressed in today's motion in Parliament by Steve Georganas MP, ACSA CEO Pat Sparrow said more must be done to cut the unacceptably long wait time so many older Australians are experiencing trying to access home care.

More than 100,000 older Australians are currently waiting to access the home care services they require – either those settling for a lower level package than they have been approved or those still waiting to receive a package – and that number is growing.

Major church aged care providers, Baptist Care Australia and UnitingCare Australia, said they are increasingly concerned that those who don't have the financial resources or support to stay safely in their homes will either miss out on care or be forced to enter residential care prematurely.

ACSA wants the Government to consider funding reforms to improve access and sustainability in the sector, including releasing more home care packages.

Ms. Sparrow said:

“More must done to cut the unacceptably long wait older Australians have trying to access these essential services. Long wait times demonstrates the sector needs to be helped to a more sustainable and stable financial footing into the future.

“Since the changes of February, 2017 it has become increasingly clear that current funding just isn't enough to meet demand, both now and into the future.

“The government must recognise that and act now to ensure older Australians do not suffer through long months waiting for the support they need to maintain their quality of life.”

“ACSA's view is that the Government could immediately alleviate some of this pressure in the system by implementing a number of key recommendations of the Legislated Review 2017, including funding additional level 3 and 4 packages,” said Ms. Sparrow.

“Funding decisions must consider the need for the industry to be sustainable and the right provision to be in place to care for the needs of the growing cohort of older individuals requiring home care.

“To fail to act on such acute need is to consign older Australians to getting much less than they deserve when it comes to access to home-based care services. This is not just an issue for now but will continue to be one into the future.

The government and the community as a whole need to engage in a more detailed conversation about how best to provide for the care needs of our ageing population.”

~ENDS~

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