



Australian Government

**Australian Institute of
Health and Welfare**

*Authoritative information and statistics
to promote better health and wellbeing*

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission to the *Inquiry into the care and management of younger and older Australians living with dementia and behavioural and psychiatric symptoms of dementia (BPSD)*.

The AIHW is a major national agency set up by the Australian Government under the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Act to provide reliable, regular and relevant information and statistics on Australia's health and welfare. We are an independent statutory authority established in 1987, governed by a Management Board, and accountable to the Australian Parliament through the Health and Ageing portfolio.

Our aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians through better health and welfare information and statistics. We collect and report information on a wide range of topics and issues, ranging from health and welfare expenditure, hospitals, disease and injury, and mental health, to ageing, homelessness, disability and child protection.

The AIHW has a strong track record in reporting on issues relating to ageing and aged care. Our *Aged Care Statistics* series includes regular reports on residential aged care, aged care packages in the community and the Transition Care Program. Other major contributions to the understanding of the characteristics and circumstances of Australia's older population include four editions of *Older Australia at a glance*, published between 1997 and 2007.

As part of the *Living Longer. Living Better* reform package, AIHW will take on the significant new role of National Aged Care Data Clearinghouse, from July 2013. This initiative will see AIHW become the principal authoritative and independent source of aged care data for researchers, providers, policy makers and the community.

The AIHW can bring a unique perspective to this Inquiry by virtue of its status as an Accredited Commonwealth Integrating Authority, under new arrangements for the integration of Commonwealth data for statistical and research purposes. AIHW can offer a very high level of expertise and a proven capacity for complex aged care data integration to inform this Committee's work.

Expertise in dementia data collection, analysis, research and reporting

The AIHW is able to draw together a wide range of data sources to improve the evidence base about dementia. We are a leader in the development of data standards to improve consistency and comparability of data collections, and already apply these skills to the complex area of dementia data.

The AIHW has a long history of dementia-related analysis, reporting and research. Several recent and current projects focussing on the condition and its impact clearly demonstrate the insights we can provide.

These include:

- A major report, *Dementia in Australia*, released in September 2012. This report, commissioned by the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA), updates the 2007 edition and brings together information from a wide and disparate range of data sources to present evidence and estimates of the nature and extent of dementia in the Australian population. Importantly, the report provided new estimates of the incidence, prevalence and projections, burden of disease and cost to the health system of the condition.
- A Working Paper, currently being prepared with funding from DoHA, on the major data gaps and inconsistencies which currently impede our understanding of dementia in this country. This paper will include recommendations for improvements in data collection, particularly in light of the increased requirement to monitor the condition as a National Health Priority Area. This paper will be released within the next few months.
- The Hospital Dementia Services Project, which is an NHMRC-funded collaborative research project with the University of Canberra and University of New South Wales. This innovative project aims to inform health practitioners, health and aged care policy makers and planners, and consumers about the influence of system-level factors on care outcomes for patients with dementia. The linked dataset developed for this project offers unique opportunities for further examination of other policy-relevant topics. Findings from this project have been released in the form of AIHW publications, and in Australian and international peer-reviewed journals.
- Analysis of nationally-linked administrative hospital and aged care data to describe pathways of care followed by older people, including those with a diagnosis of dementia. Several reports have been published on this topic including *Pathways in aged care: program use after assessment* and *Pathways in aged care: do people follow recommendations?*
- A project for Alzheimer's Australia, which uses the linked data from the Hospital Dementia Services project to estimate costs of dementia services in hospitals, and outlines strategies that may reduce these costs and promote quality dementia care. The findings from this project were published in March 2013 in the report *Dementia care in hospitals: costs and strategies*
- *Dementia among aged care residents: first information from the Aged Care Funding Instrument* examined the characteristics and care needs of over 100,000 residents with a diagnosis of dementia in 2008-09. Data are now available to update this information and extend the analysis to June 2012.

- Development in 2010, under contract to DoHA, of nationally consistent data and reporting tools for the Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Services (DBMAS), which help aged care staff and carers improve their care of people with dementia.

We would be pleased to discuss our understandings of current issues in the care and management of Australians living with dementia, largely available from our published work, at your request, and we have enclosed several relevant publications for your use.

Yours sincerely

David Kalisch
Director (CEO)

30 April 2013