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The Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Secretariat
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600

Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Inquiry into Aged Care

The Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry into Aged Care. The AAG is the leading national professional organisation committed to the promotion of gerontological research and the dissemination of relevant information to inform policy, practice and attitudes to ageing.

The AAG supports the five Aged Care Bills under the Living Longer Living Better package, and believes that they will make an important contribution to improving the aged care system for the benefit of all older Australians. Expeditious passage of the Bills will be important for establishing clarity for the sector and confidence among consumers of aged care services. In particular, the AAG is particularly supportive of the Aged Care Bills that promote:

- Increased provision of home care services and more flexible packages;
- Increased support for carers and older people with special needs;
- Greater choice and control for consumers of aged care services;
- Removal of the high/low distinction in residential aged care; and
- Improved quality of aged care services.

While the AAG is wholly supportive of the proposed legislation, I would like to take the opportunity to comment on Clause 4 “Review of Operation of Amendments” of the Aged Care (Living Longer Living Better) Bill 2013.

Under Clause 4(3), I would strongly urge the public consultation of the review to include health professionals (including allied health professionals), and gerontologists. It is essential that input is received from those working with aged care data, as well as those involved with providing health services to older people.

Referring to Clause 4(4), I would also suggest that data collection and evaluation commence as a priority from 1 July 2013. It will be important to have baseline data in place ahead of the review commencement date (presently stated as being as soon as practicable after the end



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of the period of 3 years after the commencement of Schedule 1) in order to effectively determine measurable outcomes related to quality improvement of the aged care system as set out in Clause 4(2).

As the peak body advancing ageing and aged care research, the AAG would be pleased to discuss this issue further with the Government. With over 20 Collaborating Research Centres based at universities and national institutes around Australia, and notable academic researchers with experience working with aged care data, the AAG would be well placed to inform the review process.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Julie Byles
President