

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
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To Whom It May Concern:

Inquiry into Aged Care: Living Longer, Living Better

Alzheimer's Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs' inquiry into the Governments Aged Care legislative review, ***'Living Longer. Living Better'***.

Alzheimer's Australia is strongly supportive of the proposed legislation which sets a new policy direction for an aged care system that is sustainable, provides high quality care and empowers consumers to make choices about their care and support. The legislation also acknowledges the need to address dementia across both the health and aged care system through including a policy focus on timely diagnosis, quality of care in hospitals as well as providing important support and care to people with Younger Onset Dementia.

The legislation responds directly to concerns consumers raised in our consultations on the aged care reforms. Some of the important initiatives included in the reforms are:

- Significant expansion to home care packages in order to support more older people to live at home for longer
- A focus on improving quality of care in residential care and providing transparent quality indicators for consumers to have more information on care facilities
- Greater focus on consumer choice and empowerment through making consumer directed care part of the mainstream approach to community care
- A supplement to assist with the additional costs of supporting people with dementia in community care regardless of the level of care
- A supplement to assist with the additional costs of supporting people with severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia in residential aged care
- A review and expansion of respite services to support both the carer and the care recipient.
- A key worker program to support individuals with younger onset dementia get access to appropriate care and support
- Expansion of the DBMAS program to provide support in hospitals
- Policy initiatives to address timely diagnosis and hospital care for people with dementia.

There are a number of issues that will need to be considered in the implementation of the reforms and in the review of the Living Longer Living Better program. These should not delay the passage of the legislation but should be considered as the Government refines and develops the aged care system over the longer term. These issues include:

- Reviewing the balance between the four levels of home care packages and considering a more rapid expansion of the highest level package to enable more people to stay in the community for longer.
- Providing a specific supplement in respite to acknowledge the extra costs of providing appropriate respite services for individuals with dementia
- Conducting a trial of cashing out of respite to enable individuals to have more flexibility in the services they receive.
- Improving the quality of residential aged care by providing appropriate care for those with behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia
- Reviewing the quality indicators to ensure they provide meaningful information to consumers
- Ensuring that the interface between Disability Care Australia and the new aged care system is seamless so that individuals with younger onset dementia have access to appropriate care and support
- Establishing a new National Action Framework on dementia that will result in a health system better able to respond to the needs of people with dementia

Alzheimer's Australia believes that '**Living Longer. Living Better**' legislation provides an opportunity for a new approach to aged care that will lead to better care and support for consumers and greater choice. The proposed legislation will set the platform for further work to develop a world class aged care system.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed legislative changes. If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in our submission please feel free to contact me

Kind Regards,

Glenn Rees
CEO
Alzheimer's Australia
23 April 2013