



Senator the Hon Jacinta Collins
Minister for Mental Health and Ageing
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Senate
Manager of Government Business in the Senate

Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr ~~Murphy~~

Thank you for your letter of 24 June 2013 to the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, regarding a petition submitted for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions requesting an increased number of aged care packages to the Tweed Heads/Banora Point area. Your letter has been referred to me as the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing.

I have enclosed a formal response to the subject of the petition for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions.

I appreciate you bringing the contents of the petition to the Australian Government's attention and trust that the enclosed information assists the House in responding.
Yours sincerely

Jacinta Collins

24 JUL 2013
Encl

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives

This petition of the residents of the independent living units of Darlington Retirement Community, 126 Leisure Drive, Banora Point, New South Wales, draws to the attention of the House the inadequate number of Community Aged Care Packages, including Extended Aged Care at Home Packages, available in the area of Tweed Heads/Banora Point to allow individuals to remain in their own homes.

We also highlight to the House the significant discrepancy between the considerable number of packages available on the Gold Coast (just across the border from this area) and the lesser number available in this area.

We therefore ask the House to either have the Department of Health and Ageing grant more aged care packages to the Tweed Heads/Banora Point area and/or correct the imbalance in the package availability between this area and the Gold Coast.

Response:

The Australian Government recognises that the preference of many older Australians is to remain living at home for as long as possible and is making a substantial investment in expanding access to home care.

On 20 April 2012, the Government announced a comprehensive 10 year package, *Living Longer Living Better*, to reshape aged care in Australia. It will build a better, fairer, sustainable and nationally consistent aged care system to meet the social and economic challenges of the nation's ageing population.

A key component of the aged care reforms is to provide additional support and care to help older people remain living at home. The Government is committing \$880 million over five years to expand home care and to provide more choice for people receiving care at home. Over this period, the number of operational Home Care Packages will increase by nearly 40,000 to around 100,000 packages across Australia. A further 40,000 packages will be made available over the next five years from 2017-18 to 2021-22.

As part of the aged care reforms, a new Home Care Packages Program will commence on 1 August 2013. Under this Program, there will be four levels of packages to support older people to remain living at home. A Home Care Package is a coordinated package of services tailored to meet a person's specific care needs. The package is coordinated by a home care provider, with funding provided by the Australian Government.

The Home Care Packages Program is replacing the current Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs), Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) and Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACHD) packages. The Home Care Packages Program will incorporate all existing CACP, EACH and EACHD packages which, from 1 August 2013, will be known as Home Care Packages.

With respect to the number of existing Home Care Packages available in the Gold Coast area compared to the number available in the Tweed Heads/Banora Point area, as at 30 June 2012:

- the Far North Coast Aged Care Planning Region in New South Wales, which includes the Tweed Heads and Banora Point area, had 25.6 operational community care and flexible care places (equivalent to home care places) per 1,000 people aged 70 years and over.
- the South Coast Aged Care Planning Region in Queensland, which includes the Gold Coast area, had 26.0 operational community care and flexible care places (equivalent to home care places) per 1,000 people aged 70 years and over.

On 5 July 2013, the results of the 2012-13 Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR) were announced. Through the 2012-13 ACAR, the Australian Government has allocated 5,835 new Home Care Packages across Australia, including 130 new Home Care Packages in the New South Wales Far North Coast Aged Care Planning Region.

The number of Home Care Packages available across Australia will continue to increase over the coming years, as more Home Care Packages are allocated through future ACARs, in line with the Government's significant investment in expanding the Home Care Packages Program.

Further information about services to support both older people and their carers can be obtained from the new MyAgedCare website at www.myagedcare.gov.au or the national contact centre on 1800 200 422 (free call).