



New South Wales

The Hon. Paul Lynch MP

Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Ref No. D08 /29489
EA1352302

Senator Helen Polley
Chair
Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

22 JAN 2009

Dear Senator Polley

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the inquiry into residential and community aged care in Australia. The Terms of Reference for the inquiry are focused mainly on the delivery of Australian Government funded residential and community aged care services. The NSW Government's primary focus in relation to the Inquiry is the delivery of non-residential community aged care services through the Home and Community Care (HACC) program.

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC), on behalf of the New South Wales Government, has considered each of the Terms of Reference for the inquiry and wishes to comment on the relationship between community aged care services and community care service delivery in NSW.

The HACC Program provides a range of basic maintenance and support services for frail aged people, people with a disability, and their carers. It supports these people to be more independent at home and in the community, preventing their inappropriate admission to long term residential care. The HACC Program is part of a broader framework of community and health services. In 2008/09, the NSW HACC Program budget is \$546.3 million.

The NSW Government supports the aims of the Australian Government initiative, "A New Strategy for Community Care - The Way Forward", and has provided input to the Strategy.

DADHC continues to work closely with the Australian Government on a number of key initiatives, including priorities outlined in *"The Way Forward"*. Key initiatives include current common arrangements:

- streamlining eligibility and assessment to community care services;
- establishing a national framework for quality reporting;
- setting a national framework for consumer fees; and
- implementing demonstration projects such as the Hunter Access Points Demonstration Project, which focuses on a single point of entry to community care services across a large geographical area.

DADHC has also provided input to the Council of Australian Government (COAG). COAG has agreed on improvements to simplify access and improve eligibility and assessment processes for the HACC Program, endorsing work under *"The Way Forward"* relating to entry/access points, eligibility, assessment and referral.

COAG is also currently reviewing arrangements for the provision of funding and services for people with disabilities; those who are ageing; and their carers. One option under consideration is splitting responsibilities, whereby the Australian Government takes responsibility for the provision of services to people aged 65 and over, and the States and Territories take responsibility for the provision of services to people with a disability under the age of 65 years. If these changes occur, they will have a significant impact on the provision of community health services, which are partly funded by the HACC program.

The current planning ratio referred to in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference [e] relates specifically to aged services provided by the Australian Government. The current planning ratio is limited and does not include the complexity of community care planning in NSW.

There are interrelationships between the home and community services delivered by DADHC and the community health services delivered by NSW Health. In NSW, both DADHC and NSW Health are responsible for the provision of community nursing and allied health services. NSW Health has established its ComPacks and Healthy at Home Program targeting people who are ageing and those with chronic and complex conditions, providing short term interventions designed to reduce hospital admissions and restore function.

This network of relationships demonstrates that the effective delivery of services across the community care system requires collaboration and appropriate planning. The suite of community aged care services provided by the State and Australian Governments must interrelate and rely on appropriate planning to ensure equity in service availability. The provision of dementia day care services, for example, is currently undertaken independently by both the NSW and Australian Governments.

NSW provides HACC data to the Australian Government via the Minimum Data Set. NSW would see value in data on Australian Government funded services and planning being made available to assist in broader service system planning. Such data would be useful in planning services in order to provide an equitable distribution of services.

In summary, NSW proposes that any approach to planning for older people requires a cross jurisdictional collaboration to ensure planned services are delivered in a nationally consistent manner.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Ms Alix Goodwin, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Planning on 8270 2218.

Yours sincerely



Paul Lynch MP
Minister