

30 November 2018

Home Care Not Keeping Up with Demand

Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) says data contained in the latest Home Care Packages Program shows that too many older Australians are not getting care at the level they require.

Analysis of the quarterly report (1 July – 30 Sept) confirms two key issues facing the system:

1. Overall demand for packages continues to grow.
2. Much of the demand is being met through the Commonwealth Home Support Program which provides care at a lower level than has been assessed.

There were 126,732 on the national queue as at 30 September 2018 awaiting allocation of a home care package at their approved level.

This compares with 91,847 consumers who were in receipt of a home care package at their approved level at 30 June 2018.

This represents a 25 per cent increase in the demand for home care packages over the 12 months to 30 September 2018 relative to a 29 per cent increase in consumers in receipt of a home care package at their approved level at 30 June 2018.

There were also 84,631 consumers on the national queue (66.8 per cent) as at 30 September 2018 who were not in receipt of an interim home care package and had instead been offered Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) services designed to offer low levels of in home care than a home care package.

LASA Chief Executive Office Sean Rooney said this indicates that constraints on the supply of home care packages relative to demand are resulting in significant numbers of consumers on the national queue being diverted to receive entry level care through CHSP.

“The disparity between demand and supply by home care package level warrants that an increase in higher level home care packages be made available to consumers to ensure the supply of home care packages across package levels is consistent with demand.

“While LASA recognises the increased Government investment in CHSP, today’s figures show that an increase in higher level home care packages is needed to ensure the supply of home care packages keeps pace with demand.

“The continuing shortfall in higher level home care packages is not only impacting the care available to older Australians, but providers are also facing increased challenges to deliver appropriate services and manage risks associated with unmet care needs.

“LASA renews its call on the Government to develop a sustainable funding strategy for home care that considers all the available public and private funding levers.

“With the waitlist now standing at 126,732, the Government needs to look closely at the needs of people on the national queue and at future demand to ascertain what level of additional packages will be required over the next 4 years to meet people’s needs and minimise waiting times.

“People on this list are being forced into residential care and hospitals because they cannot access the services that they are assessed to need.

“This ultimately costs the Government more than giving them a package at an appropriate level, to say nothing of the suffering it causes to older Australians and their carers.”

About Leading Age Services Australia (LASA)

LASA is the national peak body representing and supporting providers of age services across residential care, home care and retirement living. Our purpose is to enable a high performing, respected, and sustainable age services industry delivering accessible, affordable, quality care and services for older Australians.

We represent providers of age services of all types and sizes located across Australia’s metropolitan, regional and rural areas. Consistent with the overall industry profile, 57% of our Members are not-for-profit providers, 33% are for-profit providers and 10% are government providers.

Our diverse and representative membership gives LASA the ability to speak with credibility and authority on issues of importance to older Australians and the age services industry.

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