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LASA welcomes commitment to high needs dementia care

Leading Age Services Australia has welcomed the Federal Government's progress today on its commitment to establish a national network of specialist care units to provide care for people exhibiting very severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.

The Government says the program will see more than 30 specialist care units established across the country.

The Specialist Dementia Care Program will be rolled out using a phased approach, starting with an early prototype service expected to be operational by mid-2019.

A tender process in early 2019 will select up to 15 units to be operational by early 2020, subject to evaluation outcomes, the remaining sites will be selected in 2021.

The Specialist Dementia Care Program will operate as the 'third level' of Australian Government programs to assist people with dementia, complementing the existing Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service and Severe Behaviour Response Teams.

Welcoming the announcement, LASA CEO Sean Rooney said it is also important that all aged care facilities are adequately funded and staff are trained to provide high quality dementia care regardless of whether they have a dementia specific care unit.

"The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) estimated in 2016 that up to 90% of residents in high care may have some form of cognitive impairment.

"Given the high proportion of aged care residents needing additional support, it is critical that dementia care is also seen as part of the core business of mainstream aged care facilities and is appropriately supported by government.

"Innovative dementia care will draw on principles that maximise independence, reinforce personal identity, enhance self-esteem and confidence, demonstrate care for staff and welcome relatives and the local community.

"LASA wants to see Government supporting a range of models for people living with dementia, addressing the wider issues of appropriate and flexible funding to care for these people in their own environments."

About Leading Age Services Australia (LASA)

The voice of aged care
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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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