

Media release

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LASA welcomes extra residential aged care places

Leading Age Services Australia (LASA), the voice of aged care, has welcomed the Federal Government's commitment to expand residential aged care in the latest Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR).

The Government has announced 13,500 new residential aged care places across Australia, including 5,000 in regional areas, along with a \$60 million capital works investment to finance construction of new and extended aged care homes.

It says older Australians who are financially or socially challenged, who are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or LGBTI communities or who are veterans, are among those who will have priority access to more than 23 per cent of the new places.

LASA Chief Executive Officer, Sean Rooney, said the commitment to regional Australia was welcome in light of the particular problems with access to care for people in regional areas.

"Our sector is pleased to see the Government recognising the challenges facing older Australians in the bush and this announcement will help relieve some of the pressure in regional areas.

"While the increase in the number of places is welcome, it is also important to ensure that these places are adequately funded. The most recent data by industry analysts StewartBrown suggests that more than 40 per cent of residential aged care facilities are making a loss, and this rises to more than 60 per cent in regional areas.

"The additional \$320 million announced by the Government in February will help mitigate the financial pressures facing providers, but it is unlikely to even cover the anticipated increase in wage costs.

"There is no funding certainty for providers in the long-term.

"In its pre-Budget submission, LASA has called for a funding increase of \$10 per resident per day to put residential care providers on a sustainable footing and also seeking additional funding for rural and remote providers and the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, while the Aged Care Royal Commission does its important work on how to make aged care better."

Information about the 2018–19 Aged Care Approvals Round outcomes, including details of the successful providers, is available at www.agedcare.health.gov.au/funding/aged-care-approvals-round-acar/2018-19-aged-care-approvals-round.

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.