SEAMLESS AGED CARE
How to Set Up 'Support at Home' Right, the First Time

Background

Home and community services have been the bedrock of Australia's aged care system. It is critical the new aged care program meets the diverse needs of older Australians with the best possible services to help them live independently at home for as long as they choose.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's findings on system reform particularly focused on home care, which currently supports more than 1 million older Australians to live independently in their own home and community.

Home and community services should be part of an aged care system that supports older people to have the best possible life and care regardless of their faith, culture, language, financial or geographical area.

The Support at Home Alliance seeks to work with Government towards solutions, particularly for the issues raised by The Royal Commission. They advocate for social policies that centre older Australians in an aged care system that recognises:

- A human rights-based approach;
- A person's freely and competently exercised choice to the care they wish to receive, including the manner and source of care provided; and
- A sustainable balance between consumer need and fiscal constraints, maintaining a clearly detailed, holistic service for good to inform older Australians, carers, and communities of choice and affordability.

The full Support at Home report can be read here: https://acsa.asn.au/ACSA/media/General/Support-at-Home-Alliance-Position-Paper.pdf

The Alliance is made up of Aged and Community Services Australia, Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW, Community Transport, Meals on Wheels Australia, Meals on Wheels NSW, Home Modifications Australia, and NSW Neighbour Aid & Social Support Association, Community Options Australia, Australian Community Transport Association, NSW Community Aged Care Forum and Local Government NSW. The Australian Health Services Research Institute at the University of Wollongong contributed to the paper's development.

How to create seamless aged care
A New Seamless Aged Care Program must recognise a person's right to:

- Self-determination;
- Delivery of assessment of need and high-quality services in a timely manner that is integrated into community, locally available, and in the least restrictive environment;
- Culturally safe support and care for all, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people from CALD backgrounds;

- Liberty, freedom of movement, and freedom from abuse;
- Have diversity supported and promoted in the provision of care;
- A quality end of life, with appropriate and timely access to palliative care supports and expertise at home; and
- Timely and real support when in a caring role.

View three short videos by Paul Sadler (CEO, ACSA), Anita Westera (Research Fellow, University of Wollongong), and Prof. Kathy Eagar (University of Wollongong) that sets out what we wish to achieve, what the system looks like and how it will work in practice.

A Funding Model to drive Social Policy Outcomes

Funding reform is vital to achieve effective aged care reform so it delivers better support and care for older Australians.

This begins with exploring a hybrid funding model. This model has been adopted by the Australian Government for Residential Aged Care. It provides an opportunity for funding that promotes wellbeing outcomes for older Australians delivered within a flexible, safe, and responsive framework.

Funding for Support At Home must aspire to:

• Place-based service delivery costed to recognise the variance and complexity of place, the difference across communities, and that receiving culturally and socially appropriate services is critical to quality care and human dignity;
• Encourage and reward leading-edge, flexible, and responsive business practices;
• Instil confidence that support services are available to older Australians when and where they need them, and are responsive and timely;
• Allow service scalability and sustainability, with sufficient certainty to promote long-term strategic planning, workforce succession, and infrastructure/resource planning and innovation at the provider level;
• Create an incentive to achieve a social good by prioritising community service outcomes over commercial outcomes, while still achieving efficiency in use of government expenditure;
• Consider and balance client contributions with rights to access and equity in care;
• Achieve quality of life outcomes that fit within a wellness model of service delivery.

The model the Alliance is proposing is all about ensuring the viability of the providers and enabling creativity in service provision to the benefit of the client.
Notably, key features of the Government's proposed Support at Home Program are in direct contradiction of the Royal Commission recommendations including:
- total separation of support at home services from residential care, with no commonality of funding mechanisms.
- a move to a point of delivery payment platform for all services with minimal use of grant funding.
- reduction of protections for older people as new organisations and individuals with minimal experience working with older people are encouraged to enter a new marketplace for support at home service provision.
- the preference for a transactional model, which will work against relationship-based care.

Our Model:

The alternative model of the Alliance is consistent with the Royal Commission's recommendations and could be a solid basis for reform of home care and home support in Australia.

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