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**Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing**

The Transition of the Commonwealth Home Support Program to the Support at Home Program

**Submission from the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee**

30 January 2026



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Introduction

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (department) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee.

The department notes that the Government has committed to the transition of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) into the Support at Home Program no earlier than 1 July 2027. The transition of CHSP into the Support at Home Program is a decision for Government. As such, this submission is limited to broad principles against the inquiry Terms of Reference.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFACP) will remain as a separate, specialised program providing culturally safe aged care services to older First Nations peoples during this period. Home care services will also remain available under the Multi-Purpose Service Program (MPSP) in relevant rural and remote communities.

Overview

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Royal Commission) Final Report, released in March 2021, found that Australia's aged care system failed to meet community expectations and needed transformational reform. In response, the department has pursued an ambitious agenda to improve care outcomes, give older people more control and choice, and build a more sustainable aged care system.

Since July 2022, the government has committed over \$35.5 billion to improve safety, dignity and quality in aged care. Annual government spending on aged care is expected to double from approximately \$25 billion in 2021-22 to approximately \$50 billion in 2028-29.

Key improvements to aged care are already underway. These improvements are strengthening the rights of older Australians and improving transparency, quality, and access. These include:

- ☐ higher award wages for aged care workers
- ☐ 24/7 nursing and mandatory care minutes in residential care
- ☐ a Care Finder Program to support access and community connection
- ☐ greater transparency in how aged care homes spend funds
- ☐ expanded incident reporting to include home and flexible care
- ☐ Star Ratings to compare aged care home performance
- ☐ simplified access and better tailored services through the new Integrated Assessment Tool and single workforce



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- ☐ The Elder Care Support Program and the phased implementation of First Nations assessment organisations will provide tailored and culturally safe pathways for older First Nations people to access and receive aged care services.

Collectively, the new rights-based *Aged Care Act 2024* (the Act), the new Support at Home program and other reforms that commenced from 1 November 2025, represent the most significant changes to aged care in decades. These reforms will reshape how aged care is delivered, funded and regulated.

Department positions with respect to the inquiry's terms of reference

(a) The timeline for the transition of the Commonwealth Home Support Program to the Support at Home Program after 1 July 2027

It is important to note that Government has significantly invested in the extension of the CHSP through to 1 July 2027 pending its final decision on transition into Support at Home. The total funding for the CHSP over 2025-27 is \$7.2 billion. The program supports approximately 835,000 older people across Australia.

The program funds approximately 1,300 providers (government, non-government and not-for-profit organisations) to deliver services in 74 Aged Care Planning Regions.

The 2025-27 CHSP grant agreements are in effect from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2027. Block funding, payments to providers in arrears based on a National Unit Price Range for most service types will continue to apply during the grant period.

Client contribution arrangements in the CHSP continue to apply. CHSP clients are required to contribute to the cost of services, where they can afford to do so.

(b) The expected impact of this transition, including on:

- i. waiting periods for assessment and receipt of care**
- ii. the lifetime cap of \$15,000 on home modifications,**
- iii. the End-of-Life Pathway time limits**
- iv. thin markets with a small number of aged care service providers**

Support at Home is funded to reduce wait times to an average of 3 months from 1 November 2027 and support an extra 300,000 people by 2035. The program will grow over time in line with projected demand for in-home aged care services in the community.



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The Support at Home program will continue to provide eligible participants with a lifetime cap of \$15,000 for home modifications, and access to the End-of-Life pathway. This would include under any integrated program where a participant is deemed eligible.

The funding model underpinning the program will continue to support providers to ensure that older people living in rural and remote areas, and those from diverse backgrounds and life experiences, can access affordable, high-quality in-home aged care.

c) aged care provider readiness for the transition, including their workforce

Active engagement with the sector has been critical to informing the development and implementation of the Aged Care Act and the Support at Home Program. Feedback from providers has improved practical implementation planning and informed the design of supports required for transition.

The department will continue to work with the sector through a range of consultative forums to support provider and workforce readiness. This builds on the lessons learned and relative successes of ensuring sector readiness, including provider and workforce readiness, through the implementation of the *Aged Care Act 2024* and related reforms.

d) any other related matters

The department welcomes continued engagement with the Committee and the sector as reforms progress and remains committed to supporting a safe, high-quality, sustainable aged care system for all older people in Australia.