

Aged Care Service Delivery

Dear Members

Please accept my Personal Submission in relation to this review.

I wish to make a submission in relation to my own experiences with accessing Aged Care Facilities. Other family members are also currently experiencing long waiting times and stress due to wait times and having to constantly follow up services.

In General

It is an extremely complicated system for older Australians who have limited technical knowledge and ability to understand the complexities of the hierarchy of the services and that of the providers. Dept of Health oversee the Aged Care Department who does an initial assessment and if you meet the criteria, you will be registered as requiring assistance. Then as if that isn't confusing enough Aged Care has teams who recommend various Providers who will provide various services depending on the Individual needs. One older Australian may need to liaise with many different Providers. It then depends on the type of services provided and availability. All those providers have different time frames as to when they may be able to provide services.

It is then up to the Individuals to keep track and contact Aged Care if anything changes. Quite often a home maintenance person doesn't show up and doesn't let the recipient know their scheduled maintenance isn't going ahead.

As one ages it is not uncommon for one to become confused and anxious trying to engage various providers for different services. Trying to explain to anyone who may suffer from short term memory loss, stress, mental fatigue or oral communication if different languages and accents are involved. A disastrous combination that can even be fatal.

Our own experiences

My husband was assessed and approved for Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) back in July 2024. At that interview with the service Provider **Access Care Network Australia (ACNA)** representative he was identified as needing some Occupational Services such as home modifications in the home. My husband is diagnosed with Severe COPD, Diabetes, Arthritis requiring knee surgery and other ailments. Anyone who knows anything about COPD alone, knows it is a distressing ailment, that affects every day living.

By February 2025 we hadn't heard anything more and I followed up with Aged Care only to be told that the recommended Occupational service recommendation, had expired as no provider was available.

We didn't know, wasn't informed and if I hadn't followed up, would have never known!

While on the phone to Aged Care in February I said my husband needed some home maintenance such as gutter cleaning and other services he was simply unable to do. He is chronically out of breath and can't walk far. So, it was identified he needed a review and ACNA was again the recommended Provider.

From that February 25 call, Aged Care Recommended another provider TADWA for the Occupational Services. An Occupational Therapist interviewed my husband 3rd May 25. From that interview we were kept informed by TADWA and finalised the home modifications in July 25. From that interview in May he was approved for a Personal Alert Alarm which his doctor

recommended him have, in case he had further falls etc. We were very happy with the services and home modifications provided by TADWA and end result.

On 6th May my husband received a call from a representative from ACNA who we had been waiting for in relation to a Review for maintenance for gutter cleaning etc. My husband was confused and thought it was Aged Care following up about his Occupational interview with TADWA. My husband said he was very happy with the interview and that the therapist had dealt with all his issues and he was happy he did need anything else. His confusion stemmed from the fact that initially Aged Care informed me that ACNA would probably do a face-to-face review with him when they were doing my assessment for CHSP.

Little did he recognise it was ACNA the Maintenance Provider, not Aged Care and had nothing to do with TADWA or his assessment with the Occupational therapist. When I got home my husband told me Aged Care had called. I phoned Aged Care immediately only to be told they hadn't called but it was ACNA. I tried to tell them it was an error in communication and wanted ACNA to be reinstated as needing to do a Review. I was told nothing could be done and put my husband back on the waiting list for home maintenance review.

I also found out the person who spoke to my husband had notified Department of Health my Husband didn't need a review. I would have thought when my husband was rambling on about TADWA she would have realised, he didn't comprehend. I couldn't believe how quickly ACNA were to sign my husband off as not needing a review when in fact he had waited so long to get the Review and services he needed.

During the period between February and May I spoke to Aged Care a couple of times trying to generate a positive response. In April I spoke to a wonderful contact at Aged Care called Sue who asked if I needed an assessment. She asked me a series of questions and advised I was eligible for the CHSP. She said considering my husband was waiting for a review and I needed the initial assessment with a Service Provider, she would recommend we were interviewed same date by ACNA. She said I should hear within 2-4 weeks. This is now Monday 4 August and all I have received is a mail from ACNA to say Aged Care asked them to make contact. Wow 😊 I was on the waiting list and needed to wait.

Since April I have contacted Aged Care and told them we were still waiting and waiting. They said, try calling ACNA which I have done numerous times on 1300 972 920 only to wait in the queue for over 45 Mins then to be constantly told while you wait by the recorded message, you can email your query online.

As it is now winter, our gutters are blocked that have caused flooding because there is no set time when our services or interviews are ever going to happen this calendar year. If at all. I asked Aged Care if ACNA are over sourced and can't meet demand to change us to another provider. Aged Care informed us that the wait times could blow out even more.

Frustrating and stressful 😞 it certainly is. Good Government Service NO!!!. Not when one is born here, worked from 15 until 58 until I had to retire due to ill health. Paid taxes all my working life, YES!!! Self-Funded Retiree YES!!! Ever been welfare dependent NO!!!

My sister and brother in laws experience

My sister is 78 and suffers short term memory loss and is incapable of following this complex difficult system. She would surely perish trying to find out what to do or where to get help.

Her husband is 79 getting confused due to the number of agencies, providers, maintenance people he needs to follow up with in relation to getting services. He is stressed due to my sister's deteriorating condition. He along with my sister made some enquiries about entering an aged care facility and was told the waiting list was enormous and the Government were encouraging people to stay in their homes.

Both are not of the era where they are technically savvy or have any idea how to wade through various identity processes and Government Agencies or MyGov to stay connected and remain healthy or informed.

My brother-in-law is an ex professional. Having reached a very Senior Level.

Both myself and my sister had been employed continuously since 15 and my husband also worked from a very young age. None of us need the constant reminding from various Government circles we are growing in numbers and are a burden on society and need to be sent to the disposal sites.

If everyone currently in Australia and in to the future reach our ages, they will consider themselves lucky to be alive and will wish to get there and not die prematurely.

We are all self-funded retirees none of us have needed welfare leading up to retirement, government housing or bonuses etc.

I consider it is the basic human right to have good medical and aged care facilities in our latter years and many of us still contribute positively to society, ie volunteers, contribute to forums to improve facilities and services.

We all have a very long list of ancestors that fought for our Nation to ensure we experience the freedom and democracy, that we all enjoy. Sadly, not all those descendants returned a number dying at very young ages.

If the Government can't cope with the volume of old Australian people seeking services, then why compound that problem by their poor policies. Why allow so many from foreign lands coming here in their twilight years and for family reunions over 50 years. Many will be unable to work or contribute to the financial or taxation systems. Many already have pre-existing conditions plus the cost of translation services. Yet our citizens of which there are thousands across all generations can't access many Public Services due to the ever-growing queues. Aged Care is just one. Others are public Housing, Rentals, Housing, NDIS, Disability Pensions, Medical, Hospital, Mental Health, Carers etc. Surely it doesn't require expertise just basic common sense we can't continue down this path. Over populate before the economy can afford it, or the infra structure in place, will lead to a patch of doom and gloom. We will all end up living in third world conditions.

Lastly this currently system in Aged Care is obviously not working. It affects one's mental and physical health due to the long delays and complexities of this current system.

Improvements

Aged Care needs to have an automated data system that identifies the waiting times for individuals and at what stages they are currently at. I mean in my case why has the system not identified me as someone who has been waiting not 2-4 weeks but over 3 months and no Assessment from a Service Provider done. Just waiting and waiting.

My husband who is waiting on two operations, hasn't had his review for increased services due to the complexities of the system and that is since February 25. Even though he had phone contact it was clear even to a less skilled person that he was talking about Occupational services when ACNA was following up about home maintenance like Gutter and Window cleaning. When that review was signed off as being completed maybe a follow up call to his nominated contact may have identified the confusion.

The system needs a huge overall and use of indicators and key markers for various levels of home Care needs and the phone queue to streamline clients to the appropriate service level they are currently on etc. Aged Care probably would benefit from teams that solely dealt with Commonwealth Home Services Program clients and Separate teams that deal with the various levels.

A dedicated working party that included members of the public that have genuine current experience of the system as a recipient could provide much needed input. I would happily participate.

Look, I could go on and on, but it's clear the current system is broken. Didn't Ken Wyatt as Minister for Aged Care do a review some years back. So, what happened to those reforms.

I am open to be contacted to expand if needed. I am passionate about our Aging population and those affected. The current processes are clearly out of touch and needs to be fixed.

Lastly, I will add I have no complaints about the staff I have dealt with in Aged Care but they are just overwhelmed as are the Service Providers like ACNA. Unfortunately, due to my experience with ACNA who don't like to be reminded they are over recommended and unable to keep up to the level of demand.

Kind regards

3rd August 2025