

# **PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**Department of Health and Aged Care**

**Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs Legislation Committee**

**Inquiry into the Aged Care Bill 2024 (Provisions)**

**03 October 2024**

**PDR Number: IQ24-000170**

**Exceptions for younger people to access aged care services**

**Written**

**Senator:** Marielle Smith

**Question:**

Why did the government include exceptions for younger people to access aged care services? How will these provisions operate

**Answer:**

Aged care is not an appropriate service for people aged under 65 years of age, as highlighted by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. The Australian Government remains committed to the Younger Person in Residential Aged Care target of no people under the age of 65 living in residential aged care, and the proposed provisions represent the next step in achieving this goal.

These provisions do not expand access to aged care for younger people. Rather, the provisions codify the established 'exceptional circumstances' where early entry to aged care is considered appropriate. The provisions will ensure that residential aged care is no longer the provider of last resort for younger people and provide a clear legislative signal that alternative service systems need to cater for this group. Alternative options for these individuals may be through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for eligible participants, or through state and territory housing and care systems.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people aged 50-64, and people who are homeless aged 50-64 have been identified as eligible for aged care services on the basis that they are more likely to experience premature ageing. The definition of homelessness will be supported with detailed guidance to ensure its use reflects the policy intention of providing an entry pathway for people who are prematurely aged due to an experience of homelessness. This will not include those who need more suitable accommodation due to a change in their care needs who have not previously experienced homelessness.

If the person is under 65, the assessment delegate will need to make sure that the person is informed of other services available to meet their care needs (such as the NDIS or supports under the National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness), and the person will need to confirm that they still wish to access funded aged care services. While these cohorts are eligible for aged care services, they are able to access age-appropriate accommodation and support, if that is their preference.