

KEY ISSUES SUMMARY FOR THE SENATE COMMITTEE

UnitingCare Australia's Aged Care Network strongly supports the passing of the Aged Care Bill 2024 and provides the following summary of key issues raised by Network members during the Community Affairs Legislation Committee's Inquiry.

Accommodation Supplement

- An immediate increase to the Accommodation Supplement is needed, so providers are not disincentivised from admitting supported residents.
- The current supplement of \$69.49 per day is not adequate. It does not cover the cost of a room, nor is it on par with payments received through Refundable Accommodation Deposits (RAD) or Daily Accommodation Payments (DAP).

Higher everyday living fees

- Subclause 284(5) should be removed from the Bill as it would preclude providers from disclosing, or entering into a contract for, additional services prior to entry into a residential home.
- It is important that older Australians learn about additional services before admission.
- Providers need certainty about funding streams to provide additional services, which is achieved through upfront and clear conversations with prospective residents.

Support at Home

- The care management fee for home support should not be reduced from 20% to 10% straight away. Any change in the way this fee is earned and implemented needs to be staged, as this steady fee creates certainty and mitigates risks with implementation of the significant Support at Home changes.
- Grandfathering arrangements for home care package recipients should be limited to 3-years and cease when the individual moves into residential care.

Funding

- Providers need to be funded to deliver the changes required under the Bill.
- The Independent Hospital and Aged Care Pricing Authority needs to independently **set**, not just advise on, prices for all aged care services, taking into account regulatory costs.
- The proposed Thin Markets Grant will not lead to sustainability in regional and remote locations.

Time for implementation

- Once all detail is known through the Aged Care Rules, providers will need 6-months minimum to transition across to this new framework.
- Adapting to the Support at Home Program will be significant, including incorporating a new service list, training staff, updating IT infrastructure, and managing grandfathering arrangements.

UnitingCare Australia's Aged Care Network appearances			
Andrew Kinnersly Uniting AgeWell	Friday 4 October Devonport	Sarah Watson Uniting Communities	Monday 14 October Port Lincoln
Jude Emmer Wesley Mission QLD	Friday 11 October Brisbane	Tracey Burton Uniting NSW.ACT	Wednesday 16 October Newcastle
Chris Stewart Helping Hand	Monday 14 October Port Lincoln	Russell Bricknell Juniper	Friday 18 October, Perth Thursday, 24 October, Darwin (representing the Remote Accord)