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Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs  
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Dear Committee Secretary

### **Submissions now open for Inquiry into Aged Care Service Delivery**

I'm writing to you as the Chief Executive Officer of Mansfield Shire, to show our support for the Inquiry into Aged Care Service Delivery. The Government's decision to delay the commencement of the new Support at Home program until 1 November 2025 is significantly impacting the aged care services that Mansfield District Hospital is currently delivering.

Our primary concerns include:

- a) The impact of the delay on older Australians waiting for support at home, including unmet care needs and the wellbeing of seniors and their carers.
- b) The capacity of the Commonwealth Home Support Programme to meet increased demand for support at home prior to 1 November 2025.
- c) The impacts on aged care service providers, and their workforce.
- d) The impacts on our Mansfield District Hospital.
- e) The feasibility of achieving the Government's target to reduce waiting times for Home Care Packages to 3 months by 1 July 2027, considering the delay.
- f) The adequacy of the governance, assurance and accountability frameworks supporting the digital transformation projects required to deliver the aged care reforms on time.
- g) The implementation of the single assessment system and its readiness to support people to access a timely assessment now and beyond 1 November 2025.

### **Background**

Mansfield Shire has a growing population of residents aged 60 and over. According to Profile ID there were 3,485 people in this age group in 2021, a number which is predicted to increase to 4,554 in 2031. This represents a growth from 34.6% to 38.5% of our population. This increase is predicted to continue, with an estimated 4,925 residents aged 60 and over by 2036, 39.1% of our population.

In 2021, 239 people were aged 85 and over. By 2046 it is predicted that this number will have grown to 872, indicating an increasing demand for local aged care services.

## Current Home and Community Care Service Provision and Capacity

The Community Health and Wellbeing team has regular meetings with the Support at Home team at Mansfield District Hospital (MDH), the most recent being on 18 June 2025. An update from that meeting, including the current availability of Home and Community Care (HACC) Services, and the effects on My Aged Care delays from 1 July to 1 November 2025 in Mansfield Shire, is provided as follows:

- The backlog of applications will have an enormous effect on the following services: personal care, transport, and in-home respite.
- Domestic assistance –not finding staff to work for current award rates and therefore we must waitlist cleans as we can only pick up so much with our qualified workers.
- Maintenance – the waitlist is expanding for home maintenance.
- Risk reduction gardening and maintenance work is only able to be completed outside of Mansfield Township boundaries due to HACC funding guidelines.
- Commonwealth home support services unavailable at Woods Point (remote area).
- KPA are taking 6 + weeks, leaving many recipients in limbo.
- Hybrid Clients are in between the old and new system and are unable to receive support.
- The delays will affect CHSP assessments for under 65 who are not eligible for My Aged Care.
- MDH have 270 active CHSP clients and around 50 clients we broker care to under HCP and around 40 on the waitlist for mostly cleaning under CHSP. Its 8 weeks between registering and getting an assessment for any codes. That is concerning.

## Regional Assessment Services

Assessments have begun, however there have been no face-to-face assessments undertaken in Mansfield Shire this year. Both services who provide assessments for this area, Aspire4life and APM, are actively recruiting for an assessor.

All assessments are done via telehealth and completed using referrals received by MDH from My Aged Care (MAC). Assessment services provide a basic service with initial assessment only; reviews are completed over the phone as they are no longer funded. If the MDH Support at Home team require a new client code for any additional service, they contact the provider and request the relevant code so they can provide the service.

The two assessment services that were chosen through the open tender conducted in 2024 by the Department of Health are as follows:

- APM - a disability employment service established in 1994 providing vocational rehabilitation services. It became a national service in 2002 and has since expanded its operations nationally and internationally. In 2024 APM supported more than 2 million people in 11 countries and 1,701 locations in the early childhood, youth, employment, insurance, justice, veterans, health, disability, and aged care sectors. The area office is in Melbourne and according to the website, assessment offices are located in Hobart, Tasmania and in Ipswich and Aitkenvale, Queensland and Western Australia.
- Aspire-4life - a not-for-profit human services organisation offering planning assessment and case management services. They are contracted to deliver assessment services across 8 service areas in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria. The organisation

head office is in Coolangatta, Queensland.

Council has previously advocated to the local federal member for Indi, Helen Haines MP raising concerns about the lack of local face-to-face assessment services.

Yours faithfully

**Kirsten Alexander**  
Chief Executive Officer

