

# 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: IQ24-000169

#### Key differences between Home Care Packages and proposed Support at Home program

#### Written

**Senator:** Marielle Smith

#### Question:

What are the key differences between home care packages and the proposed Support at Home program

#### Answer:

Key differences between the current Home Care Packages (HCP) program and the new Support at Home program that will commence from 1 July 2025 include:

**Funding that grows with projected population** – funding will grow over time in line with the projected growth in need in the community, with a target wait time of 3 months from July 2027.

- The HCP program has relied on regular Government decisions to release additional packages to keep up with growth in client numbers, and has had fluctuating wait times.

**Higher maximum budget** – the maximum ongoing budget will be around \$78,000 per year.

- Under the HCP program the maximum package is \$61,440.

**End-of-life classification** – an older person diagnosed with 3 months or less to live will have expedited access to a \$25,000 budget for 12 weeks.

- The HCP program does not have an equivalent package.

**Separately funded Assistive Technology and Home Modifications (AT-HM) Scheme** – people will be approved at assessment for a separate funding amount for assistive technology and/or home modifications under Support at Home.

- Under the HCP program, people have to save their package to access AT-HM, potentially forgoing other services.

**Moving to a quarterly budget** – the annual Support at Home annual budget will be divided into 4 equal budgets that each cover 3 months of the year. Participants who have not spent their budget within the quarter will be able to accrue a maximum of \$1000 or 10% of their quarterly budget (whichever is higher) from one quarter to the next.

- Under the HCP program, package amounts accrue daily and any unspent funds accrue in home care accounts for participants to draw down. In practice this results in high levels of unspent funds that never get spent.

**A defined service list** – under Support at Home, all services will be specified on a service list with clear inclusions and exclusions that will largely mirror existing services accessed through the HCP Program.

- Under the HCP program there is guidance about specified inclusions and exclusions.

**Price caps set by government** – under Support at Home, prices charged by service providers against participant budgets must be below price caps set by government based on advice of the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA).

- Under the HCP program, providers set prices.

**No separate administration charges** – package management costs will be incorporated into prices under Support at Home

- Under the HCP program, package management fees up to 15% of a participant's package may be charged by providers.

**Care management funding set at 10% of all quarterly budgets** – this funding will be set aside for providers to use to deliver responsive care management support across all Support at Home participants.

- Under the HCP program providers may charge up to 20% of a package as a care management fee.