



Alzheimer's Australia to discuss gaps in dementia care

Parliament's Health and Ageing Committee will meet with Alzheimer's Australia, the peak body providing support and advocacy for the 250,000 Australians living with dementia at a hearing on 11 September to discuss strategies to improve diagnosis and management of dementia.

In a submission to the committee's inquiry into dementia early diagnosis and intervention, Alzheimer's Australia told the committee that as a consequence of non- and late-diagnosis, the majority of people with dementia in Australia slip through the gaps and miss out on crucial opportunities for early intervention and care.

Alzheimer's Australia is concerned that many health professionals, including GPs, have difficulty differentiating normal ageing from early stages of dementia. They told the committee these professionals lack specific knowledge about dementia assessment, management or appropriate referral pathways.

In addition Alzheimer's Australia have said that Australia's primary health care system lacks the necessary processes to reach a diagnosis of dementia earlier on. They suggest issues including the lack of dementia-specific training; utilisation of skilled practice nurses; and established referral pathways to specialists who can make or confirm a diagnosis are all barriers to care.

Committee chair, Steve Georganas said that a number of deficiencies raised by Alzheimer's Australia were of significant concern.

"Dementia was recently named as Australia's 9th National Health Priority alongside diabetes, cancer and mental health. This is a clear signal that there will now be more focus on early diagnosis and intervention for people with dementia and the committee is focused on finding ways to break down these barriers to care," Mr Georganas said.

PROGRAM

12:00am Alzheimer's Australia (National Office) (Submission 44)
1:00pm Close

VENUE: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra ACT

All are welcome to attend.

The hearing will be webcast live on: www.aph.gov.au/News_and_Events/Watch_Parliament

For media comment, please contact Ms Hannah Frank from the Office of Steve Georganas MP on 08 8376 9000.

For all other enquiries, please contact the Committee Secretariat by phone on (02) 6277 4145 or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/haa.