

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2015-16 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 3.3 Home Care

Question No: SQ15-000379

Topic: Home Care Packages

Hansard page: Written

Senator Polley, Helen asked:

Can you outline the demand vs. the availability for the various levels of Home Care Packages across the states and territories, and in metropolitan, regional and rural areas?

What is being done to ensure there are suitable numbers of packages available where they are required and that those who most need them are able to access them?

Answer:

The Department does not collect data from providers regarding the demand vs availability for Home Care Packages.

The Australian Government's needs-based planning framework aims to ensure sufficient supply of residential and home care places by ensuring that the growth in the number of aged care places matches growth in the aged population. It also ensures balance in the provision of services among metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas, as well as among people needing differing levels of care.

The Government makes new home care places available through the Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR). The Department of Social Services allocates the new places after conducting a competitive assessment process based on the provisions of the *Aged Care Act 1997*. Places are allocated to those applicants who can demonstrate that they can best meet the care needs of older Australians in a particular aged care planning region.

Once the home care places have been allocated through the ACAR, the decision to offer an eligible person a package, including at what level the package is offered (within scope of the approval) is made by the home care provider, taking into account the person's needs and the availability of packages at the relevant levels.

Over time, the development of the client record within My Aged Care will provide the ability to better understand areas of high need.

In the recent Budget, the Government announced that, from February 2017, funding for home care packages will be attached to the consumer, rather than to places allocated to individual providers. The upcoming 2015-16 ACAR is expected to be the last ACAR in which home care places are allocated to providers.

The total number of aged care places, including home care packages (available to consumers) and residential care places (allocated to providers), will continue to be determined in line with the Australian Government's needs based planning framework. From February 2017, it is expected that new home care packages will be made available to consumers through My Aged Care. The details of the implementation arrangements will be developed in consultation with stakeholders in the aged care sector.