

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

Outcome Number: 3.1 Access and Information

Question No: SQ15-000637

Topic: IT Support for Older Australians

Hansard page: Written

Senator Rachel Siewert asked:

Question:

Background:

In the current budget the government has allocated funds for an upgrade of IT services for aged care, disability and carers. The papers suggest that these funds will extend existing IT programs to deliver support to carers and to people in need, from professional service providers. Current and planned IT programs exclude support from family and friends, discouraging independence and making it difficult to harness their substantial untapped goodwill and resources.

- What is in the budget that will deliver IT tools for family and friends to make it easier for them to contribute to, and even to coordinate, the support and care for older and disabled people?

Answer:

As part of the 2015-16 Budget, the Government announced funding of \$33.7 million over four years to deliver a national carer gateway. From December 2015, the national carer gateway will provide a nationally identifiable place for all carers to go for information, regardless of who they care for, to access support and referral to services.

The national carer gateway will consist of a national website, with a service finder, and a national contact centre.

In addition, My Aged Care already provides IT tools that family, friends and carers of aged care clients can use to make it easier for them to contribute to and coordinate the support and care of older people. Funding for My Aged Care in 2015-16 continues through Department of Social Services Programme 3.1: Access and Information.

My Aged Care was introduced in July 2013 and includes a national contact centre and website to assist older people, and their family, friends and carers to navigate the aged care system and find services that meet that person's needs. The website includes online service finders, fee estimators for pricing of home care packages and aged care homes, and online information about aged care home maximum accommodation prices.

The Department of Social Services estimates that of the 100,000 unique visitors to the website each month, around 40 to 50 per cent are family members, friends and carers.