

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000718

OUTCOME: 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

Topic: Home Care Packages

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

What feedback has been received by the Department of Health from all local ACATs about the effectiveness of the new processes and what improvements have been made?

Answer:

The Department of Health has received a range of feedback from state and territory Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) managers about the *Increasing Choice in Home Care* reforms. Key areas of feedback are:

- The 'high priority' component of the new prioritisation system is working to ensure clients with enhanced urgency are receiving faster access to a home care package.
- Some clients have asked for their priority to be reviewed in order to access a home care package quicker. Anecdotal reports are that home care package providers may be influencing some of this behavior.
- ACATs are making use of the new system's functionality, which was designed to help them support clients who need additional assistance to access home care.

In response to feedback, the Department has strengthened the messaging to providers to emphasise that a high priority approval is the decision of an ACAT delegate, intended for clients with a genuinely urgent need only. The Department is also working closely with ACAT managers on an ongoing basis to ensure assessments are undertaken in a nationally consistent approach, are timely and that the prioritisation for a home care package is based on the needs of an individual client.

No changes to the prioritisation system have been made since implementation on 27 February 2017.