

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 30 May 2017**

**Ref No:** SQ17-000850

**OUTCOME:** 6 - Ageing and Aged Care

**Topic:** HCP - ACAT feedback

**Type of Question:** Written Question on Notice

**Senator:** Polley, Helen

**Question:**

What feedback has the Department received from ACATs around Australia about the effectiveness of the new prioritisation and package allocation processes? Have any improvements been made?

**Answer:**

The Department of Health (the Department) 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 aged care 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.