

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2014-15 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 3

Question No: 409

Topic: Aged Persons - Homelessness

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Polley asked:

- a. What processes and procedures are in place to assist older people who are homeless (or at risk of becoming homeless) entering residential aged care?
- b. Which level of government takes responsibility for this client group entering aged care?
- c. What role does the Aged Care Gateway play?
- d. Does the Aged Care Gateway or DSS generally provide any outreach services to this group?

Answer:

- a. There are a number of measures to support access to residential care for people with a history of, or at risk of homelessness. Funding is available as part of the homeless component of the Viability Supplement and the Homeless Supplement to better support aged care homes that specialise in caring for people with a history of, or at risk of, homelessness. In addition, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are recognised as a special needs group who must be taken into account in the aged care planning process under the *Aged Care Act 1997*.

The Aged Care Assessment Program (ACAP) operates the Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) across Australia. ACATs conduct aged care assessments for approval of subsidised aged care provided under the *Aged Care Act 1997* to comprehensively assess the care needs of frail older people, including people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and to assist them to gain access to the most appropriate types of services, including approval for Commonwealth Government subsidised care services.

- b. The Commonwealth is the level of government responsible for older people entering the aged care system. The Commonwealth funds and regulates the provision of residential care, home care, home support and flexible care to older people approved to receive it.
- c. From July to December 2015, the provision of comprehensive assessment for services delivered under the *Aged Care Act 1997* will transition to the My Aged Care with the processes and procedures for assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness evolving with the integration of the ACATs into MyAgedCare.
- d. As part of My Aged Care (Gateway system), the Commonwealth is also establishing a linking service support capability. Where an older person's complex circumstances may be impeding their access to aged care services, this capability will assist in linking them to the various services they require in order to live in the community with dignity, safety and independence. The issues include homelessness, mental

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health issues, drug and alcohol issues, elder and systems abuse, neglect, financial disadvantage and cognitive decline.

The Department administers the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged Program (ACHA) which provides support to older Australians with a history of or at risk of homelessness outside of the residential care environment. ACHA provides outreach services to support financially disadvantaged older people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness. The programme links clients with the most appropriate housing and care services in order to meet their immediate and on-going needs.