

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 21 October 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000889

OUTCOME: 11 – Ageing and Aged Care

Topic: Home Care Packages

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Polley, Helen

Question:

By making home care available to consumers on individual needs, how will you address the issue of availability of packages? Particularly levels 3 and 4 packages?

Answer:

The Australian Government recognises that many older Australians want to continue to live at home rather than entering residential aged care. In line with this wish, the Government is expanding access to support and care to help older people at home. By 2021-22, the ratio of home care packages will increase to 45 places per 1000 people aged 70 years and over.

The Government is committed to increasing the number of home care packages from around 72,000 to around 100,000 nationally by 2017.

The appropriate level of home care a consumer requires is determined by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). A home care consumer who has been assessed by an ACAT as requiring either a Level 3 or Level 4 Home Care Package may access a lower level package if no such packages are available. The assessment ensures that, when such packages become available, the consumer is able to transition from the lower level package immediately, thus maintaining continuity of care.

The Government currently makes new home care places available through the Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR). The Department of Health allocates the new aged care places (home care and residential care) 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.

A key focus of the 2015 ACAR is the release of significantly more Level 3 and Level 4 home care places than were made available in the 2014 ACAR. The 6,045 home care places include 5,595 level 3 and 4 packages. This is an increase of 1,729 (45 per cent) places compared to the number of Level 3 and 4 places allocated through the 2014 ACAR. The outcome of the 2015 ACAR will be announced in March 2016.