

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017, 19 October 2016**

**Ref No:** SQ16-000539

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

**Topic:** Commonwealth Continuity of Support Program

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

**Senator:** Siewert, Rachel

**Question:**

Can the Government provide further information on the Commonwealth Continuity of Support (CoS) program and advise whether this program will empower eligible participants with genuine choice and control over the services and supports they need to remain independent and engaged with their community?

**Answer:**

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has agreed that as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) rolls out nationally, it is a priority to ensure continuing support for older people with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS.

To meet this COAG commitment, the Australian Government will provide continued support to older people with disability who are not eligible for the NDIS through a new Commonwealth Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme.

The new Program is expected to support over 8,500 older people with disability who are aged 65 years and over or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who are assessed as being ineligible for the NDIS and are clients of state-administered specialist disability services at the time the CoS Program commences in their region.

The new Program is being implemented to ensure that these older people are supported to achieve similar outcomes to those they were achieving before transitioning to the new arrangements.

Under these arrangements, it is not expected that services for clients will need to change or that people will need to move. The continuity of support arrangements will aim to enable clients to continue to receive services without significant disruption to their support arrangements.

Once the NDIS completes its rollout in a region, there will be no new entrants to the CoS Programme and once all existing clients transition out, the programme will cease.

Implementation of the CoS Programme will commence from 1 December 2016 in New South Wales and Tasmania and be progressively implemented broadly in line with the roll-out of the NDIS. Full implementation across all participating states and territories will occur by 1 July 2019.

To maintain client choice, independence and wellbeing and ensure that services are responsive to client needs, the CoS Programme will:

- continue to fund community access services such as learning and life skills development, recreation programs and other supports that provide opportunities for older people with disability to participate in their community and enjoy their full potential for social independence;
- continue to fund Individual Support Packages (ISP) that are allocated to a nominated individual client with disability to purchase services that respond to their support needs and goals in a flexible and client-centred way. Under all ISP models, the level of choice and control that is held by the client is decided by the client; and
- ensure that CoS clients have a review of their supports undertaken on an annual basis or as needed to ensure the services they are receiving remain appropriate to their needs.

More information on the Programme is available on the [Department of Health](http://www.health.gov.au) website at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au) (search for ‘continuity of support’).

Continuity of support applies to a broad range of people considered ineligible for the NDIS, including those accessing Commonwealth programmes that are transitioning or ceasing. More information on these programmes is available on the Commonwealth Department of Social Services website at [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)