



NEWS RELEASE

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PROPOSED AGED CARE REFORMS APPLAUDED

COTA Australia, (Council on the Ageing) the peak aged care consumer body representing more than 500,000 older Australians, has applauded the Productivity Commission's Draft Report on Caring for Older Australians, released overnight.

Chief Executive of COTA Australia, Ian Yates, said the Draft Report "lays the foundations for an aged care system over the next few decades that would offer older Australians:

- faster and easier access to high quality support and care
- where and when they need it
- on a fair and equitable basis
- with older people having much greater choice and control."

"Aged care reform has sat in the "too hard" basket for too long" Mr Yates said; "It has become rigid and often unresponsive to older Australians real needs; it is suffocated in red tape and outdated service menus; and it is badly underfunded and inequitable."

"The Commission's recommendations respond in a very positive and visionary way to almost all of COTA's concerns in its extensive submission to the Inquiry. COTA's submission was based on extensive consultation with older Australians over many years"

"We warmly welcome the adoption of our "Gateway" proposal to streamline, speed up and simplify access to aged care and to allocate people an entitlement to care based on their needs"

"The progressive phasing out of outdated and rationed service models like 'packages' and 'bed licences' is long overdue, to be replaced with a Medicare-like approach that enables consumers to have choice and flexibility and get care in their own homes or wherever suits them best, at a cost they can afford".

"The Commission's funding proposals will require detailed review and discussion in the forthcoming consultation period, but are based on sound and fair principles that mean people contribute according to their means, with no-one missing out on quality support and care because they cannot afford it."

"COTA also applauds Minister Butler's commitment today to wait for the Commission's Final Report in June before the government responds, but to be then guided by the principles of older Australians being able to access appropriate care when they need it, with greater choice and control than now, funded on a sustainable and fair basis"

"This is an historic moment in the development of a better aged care and support system for Australians that will last us the next 20 to 30 years", Mr Yates said.

COTA calls on providers, unions, professionals and all sides of politics to get behind the detailed work with the Commission between now and it's Final Report in June to come to a broad consensus on reform of aged care that will pass through parliament with bipartisan support and start being implemented in the 2012 federal budget".

Further Information:

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