



Kate Chaney MP FEDERAL MEMBER
FOR CURTIN

Senate Standing Committee on
Community Affairs

Inquiry into Aged Care Service Delivery

SUBMISSION

Kate Chaney MP
Federal Member for Curtin

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I welcome the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry examining the implications for older Australians, their families, carers, service providers and state and territory health systems of the Government's decision to delay the commencement of the new Support at Home program until 1 November 2025.

This submission has been informed by:

- three years of receiving constituent inquiries regarding issues in the Aged Care system;
- meetings with individuals, seniors' groups, advocacy organisations and aged care providers; and
- regular visits to retirement villages and aged care facilities.

My comments relate to the primary terms of reference of the Committee:

(a) the impact of the delay on older Australia waiting for support at home, including unmet care needs and the wellbeing of seniors.

Many older Australians are currently waiting too long for crucial support, with significant consequences.

Two examples from Curtin are outlined below:

- (1) My constituent, 93 year old, Maureen Mumme, recently waited 13 months to access a Level Four Commonwealth Home Support Package following her approval. Maureen lives on her own and receives a pension. Despite having a diagnosis of dementia and requiring significant support, her need was considered a medium priority.

Prior to her assessment, Maureen had suffered a number of falls in her home. While her care needs were not being met, her family stepped in to help and she also spent \$1000/month on her care from her meagre savings.

Advocacy from my office did not result in any higher priority being given to Maureen. The delay caused much distress to Maureen and her family and forced them to consider residential aged care even though this was not their preferred outcome.

- (2) Another example from Curtin is Annie, who is 80 years old and has a Parkinson's-like illness that is progressing rapidly. She is being cared for in the family home in Mosman Park by her 84-year-old husband, Clive.

Clive has diabetes and a number of other conditions and is becoming frail and fatigued. Annie's daughter, Beth, contacted my office 6 months after her mother was approved for a Level Four Commonwealth Home Support Package. The delay meant Annie and Clive were unable to have necessary modifications and support services made available to them in their home. This left Annie at increased risk of falls and Clive increasingly fatigued, and so increased the risk of Annie requiring a premature

move to residential aged care and separation from Clive, which would have had a detrimental effect on them both. Through information from my office and advocacy from her family, Annie's priority was upgraded from medium to high priority. A package was made available in February this year, after a delay of eight months.

These examples highlight the unacceptable wait times for support at home. The recent announcement of the delay in implementing the Support at Home program means people currently approved for packages and waiting for availability will need to wait a further four months.

These wait times are resulting in:

- **increased stress;**
- **further pressure on families, particularly women, to step in and cover care needs;**
- **depletion of savings;**
- **serious concerns for older Australians' health and safety;**
- **increased hospital admissions; and**
- **premature moves into residential aged care.**

I recently met with representatives from National Seniors Australia, whose Chairperson lives in my electorate. A significant advocacy priority for National Seniors is the urgent release of more packages to ease current wait times. NSA notes that 88,000 Australians are currently approved and waiting for a package.

There are no material obstacles to proceeding with the delivery of some additional Home Care packages under the existing scheme.

Bringing forward at least some new packages would provide some much needed relief to older Australians and their families, noting that funding has already been allocated in the federal budget.

Thank you for considering this submission as part of the inquiry.



Kate Chaney MP
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