

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 4 December 2025

SUPPORT AT HOME APPROACH HAVING UNACCEPTABLE IMPACTS ON OLDER PEOPLE: GOVERNMENT MUST ACT NOW

Older people are waiting up to 17 weeks to receive their full Support at Home program entitlements, despite long wait times for assessment and repeated promises by the Government that processing times and service access would improve.

Evidence provided by Department of Health, Disability and Ageing officials at Senate Estimates has revealed a litany of challenges with the sector, including that 93 per cent of Support at Home packages released since the program's commencement in November have been 'interim packages', offering older people only 60 per cent of the services they have been assessed as needing.

We also heard that around 113,150 older people are still awaiting an assessment and in addition 107,281 are waiting for a Support at Home package allocation. This means over 220,000 older people are stuck in the system, with many receiving only interim or insufficient supports while their needs escalate.

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) CEO Craig Gear said the revelations are unacceptable and undermine confidence in a system that must be open and accountable.

"These deeply concerning figures are consistent with feedback we are receiving from older people," Mr Gear said.

"Our network member independent aged care advocates have reached capacity and are under significant demand taking hundreds of calls from older people every day with concerns about Support at Home – price increases, reduction in services, complex service agreements, and interim funding levels with no certainty on when full funding will be available.

"Advocates across OPAN's national network report feeling exasperated and frustrated by the lack of action to meet the needs of older people waiting to be

assessed or who are not receiving the support they deserve to remain independent and stay at home. They also report there are limited options to escalate concerns or rectify issues.

"Older people are telling advocates and OPAN that they do feel worse off under the new system – even those who may not be paying more themselves – that they are reporting receiving less services due to price increases.

"The problems also include a lack of transparency and comparability on pricing from providers despite a 7 November 2025 deadline.

"Older people are being let down by the system and losing confidence in it.

"They deserve to be treated with dignity and respect but are instead victims of red tape and bureaucracy.

"We recognise that this significant reform takes time, but the Government needs to be more agile to fix pricing reasonableness, transparency and reassessments. We are working with the department and providers to address these concerns, but the pace of reform is far too slow. The Government must act urgently to overhaul processing times, address pricing levels and transparency this year, and improve the aged care experience by committing to a 10-week maximum time on interim packages now.

"The new Aged Care Act is an exciting new chapter for the sector, but if the basic needs of older people are being ignored and neglected, then the spirit of the reforms is undermined."

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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MEDIA FOR STORIES RELATING TO OLDER PEOPLE



It is critical to provide older people with an avenue to get support when covering stories about aged care. We strongly encourage you to include the following message in your story to enable older people to seek support:

For information or support regarding aged care, please call the Aged Care Advocacy Line on 1800 700 600 or visit opan.org.au