

MEDIA RELEASE

9 May 2018 (for immediate release)

COTA NT on Federal Budget 2018 – More commitment needed to ageing population and aged care

COTA NT's CEO Sue Shearer has welcomed most of the initiatives from the 2018 Federal Budget, but warns it is not enough. "One of the highlights is the provision of \$189.7m over five years to support workers aged 45 to 70 to adapt to changing circumstances and remain in work," says Ms Shearer, "However, while they are being trained they would still be on Newstart – at just \$40 per day, this is deplorable.

"While the increase in My Aged Packages is welcomed, it does not go anywhere near the demand for these packages," Ms Shearer adds. "With 100,000 Australians waiting for all the differing levels of these package - and the wait list in the Territory is over six months - only 20,000 high needs packages were released. Hopefully this will assist approximately 40 Territorians currently being hostelled in the RDH and other regional areas.

"The merging of the Home Care and Residential funding pools will make more Home Care Packages possible, but that is in the future. Couple this with the projection that by 2022 there will be 252,00 job vacancies in the Aged Care and Disability Sector - how does this add up? With residential care allocated to providers, and not in response to consumer demands, Territorians will still not have the ability to choose their nursing home. And if there is one available, you will be put on a five-year wait list. More is needed.

"Other measures are welcomed such as the Pension Work Bonus of \$50.00 a fortnight. This means retirees on the Aged Pension can now earn up to \$300 per fortnight that won't affect their pension. Expansion to the Pension Loan Scheme is also welcomed, as are the changes to superannuation for self-funded retirees.

"Hopefully all these measures will actually take place and the commitment to older Australians will continue after the Federal election in 2019."

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Further information about: *Extra home care packages and other aged care measures* are in the full media release published on the COTA NT website, <http://www.cotant.org.au/cota-media-releases/>

COTA Australia's Address to Federal Budget 2018 - <https://www.cota.org.au/news/>

- **Federal Budget recognises role of older Australians**
- **Federal Budget 2018 – welcome commitment to better planning for an ageing population and aged care**

COTA NT is the peak policy development, advocacy and lobby organisation for older Territorians

Extra home care packages and other welcome aged care measures

- 20,000 new **high-level home care packages** for older Australians will be introduced over the next four years and measures to make the aged care system easier to navigate for consumers. 60,000 people are currently waiting for a package.
- The government will also allocate an **additional 13,500 residential aged care beds**.
- **Home care funding** is the centrepiece of the government's aged care reform package announced in the Federal Budget. The budget indicates total number of home care packages will be 151,500 by 2021-22 - an additional 63,910 packages, compared to current 2017-18 numbers (including the extra 34,000 high-level home care packages).
- \$102.5 million for older Australians **mental health services** including \$82.5M for older Australians in residential care and \$20M for Australians over the age of 75 years living in the community.
- \$7.4 million over 2 years to trial **Integrated Consumer Supports**, including help for older Australians to navigate aged care, in some case with help by other older Australians.
- \$14.8 million for a **new assessment framework and** a combined assessment workforce to make accessing aged care faster, simpler and more consistent around Australia.
- \$253.8 million over four years to establish the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**.
- \$32.6 million over four years to enhance the regulation of aged care provider quality to respond more quickly to care failures
- \$8.8 million over four years to provide transparency over aged care provider quality
- \$105 million for culturally safe aged care services in remote Indigenous communities
- \$32.8 million over 3 years for extra palliative care in residential aged care to ensure people can die in their place of choice

COTA Australia

COTA notes that residential aged care providers will be provided with \$50M over two years to implement the new Aged Care Quality Standards which include a much stronger focus on "consumer outcomes".

COTA is very concerned that the recommendation of the Carnell and Paterson Aged Care Quality Review, to have a Consumer Commissioner who will ensure that resident and family engagement is embedded in Standards compliance and quality improvement, is being sidelined in the Government's plans for the Quality and Safety Commission.

COTA also applauded the Government's combining of the residential and home care funding from July 1, 2018 to create greater flexibility to respond to changing needs.

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