COTA
For older Australians

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COTA Australia welcomes Senate report; urges compassionate, timely access to home care

COTA Australia welcomes the release of the Senate Community Affairs References Committee report into aged care service delivery - including recommendations to improve access to home care and support.

Patricia Sparrow, Chief Executive of COTA Australia, said the report reflects what older people and their families experience every day: delays, rationing and limited transparency.

“Australia has an ageing population. We need a system that can meet current demand and be sustainable for the future.”

Ms Sparrow said the fact that we have more than 200,000 older Australians either waiting for home care packages or waiting to be assessed for a package should alarm everyone.

“No one should be left without the support they need to remain independent at home,” Ms Sparrow said.

“The current backlog undermines independence, health and dignity. Timely access to care at home is an essential element of a rights-based aged care system. Every extra week on a waitlist adds stress for older people and their families.”

“We welcome the Government’s commitment to release 83,000 packages between now and the end of the financial year and we must ensure ongoing and sustained investment.

“COTA has long said no one should have to wait more than 30 days to receive home care services, and this report reinforces that position.”

Ms Sparrow said the Senate report is a crucial contribution to aged care reform making important recommendations to:

- Increase the availability of Support at Home places and release promised Home Care Packages to meet demand.
- Publish regular, accessible data on assessment and care start times to improve transparency and accountability.
- Review and improve the single assessment system to ensure it is fair, timely and fit for purpose.

“Reform implementation commences on 1 November. It won’t be perfect from day one, but having a rights-based system is critical. Monitoring, adjusting and improving reforms throughout implementation will be essential to address any unintended consequences and ensure a rights-based system becomes a reality.

“This report points to where we can keep strengthening the agenda,” Ms Sparrow said.

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