



## Aged Care changes – the journey so far

Over 1 million people in Australia receive aged care services. By 2050 this number is expected to rise to more than 3.5 million older people.

This is a time of significant change for the aged care sector - and the people and organisations that are part of it. The changes to aged care that commenced in 2013 are aimed at ensuring the best outcomes for older people and for the organisations that provide aged care services, both now and in the future.

The Productivity Commission's 2011 report *Caring for Older Australians* highlighted a number of weaknesses and challenges affecting consumers and service providers. These include a system that is difficult to navigate; services and consumer choice are limited; the quality of services is variable and there is a lack of consistency in meeting consumer needs, pricing of services, and the application of subsidies and consumer co-contributions. There are also workforce and skill shortages. The report identified a clear need to move towards a system that is fair, flexible and sustainable - a market driven system that will deliver efficient, effective, innovative and quality services for older Australians.

A number of improvements to the aged care system have already occurred; these include:

- My Aged Care provides older people, their families and carers with information and services via the [My Aged Care website](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) (www.myagedcare.gov.au) and a My Aged Care contact centre (1800 200 422) that operates from 8am - 8pm Monday to Friday and from 10am - 2pm Saturday, local time across Australia.
- financial changes such as the introduction of income testing in Home Care Packages, means testing in Residential Care, and new accommodation payment arrangements that give aged care residents the ability to choose between paying by a lump sum, daily or combined payment;
- significant expansion in the number of Home Care Packages and consumer directed care as a key feature of all new Home Care Packages.

These improvements were underpinned by a set of legislative changes that allow for a more flexible model of care and the development of a consumer led system.

The July 2015 changes to aged care will result in a system that is easier to use and provides greater choice and control for consumers. It includes further expansion of My Aged Care, establishment of the Commonwealth Home Support Program, and the conversion of all Home Care Packages to be delivered on a Consumer Directed Care basis.

## **Summary of changes to date**

### **28 June 2013**

- Five bills covering changes to aged care were passed into law and progressively implemented.

### **1 July 2013**

- My Aged Care website and Contact Centre introduced to provide information for consumers about aged care and how to find Commonwealth-funded aged care services.

### **1 August 2013**

- New Home Care Packages programme commenced (replacing the Community Packaged Care Programme, comprising the Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs), Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) packages and the Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACHD) packages).
- Implementation of new supplements in both home care and residential care.
- The Aged Care Commissioner's level of independence strengthened.

### **1 October 2013**

- Homeless Supplement introduced; and
- Aged Care Pricing Commissioner appointed.

### **1 January 2014**

- Australian Aged Care Quality Agency established to accredit residential care facilities, replacing the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency.

### **19 May 2014**

- Residential care providers required to publish accommodation prices on My Aged Care.

### **31 January 2014**

- Aged Care Pricing Commissioner started assessing applications from residential care providers for approval to charge above the maximum accommodation amount.

### **1 July 2014**

- My Aged Care website expanded to include online fee estimators for Home Care Packages and residential care.
- Changes to means testing for Home Care Packages and residential care.
- New accommodation payment arrangements commenced.
- New higher level of accommodation supplement available for new or significantly refurbished services.
- Australian Aged Care Quality Agency's role expanded to include quality review of home care services.

## **Commencing 1 July 2015**

- Expansion of My Aged Care to include:
  - A client record to collect and share client information;
  - Nationally consistent screening and assessment – starting with Regional Assessment Services for Home Support from 1 July 2015 and progressive commencement of Comprehensive Assessment by Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) between 1 July and 31 December 2015;
  - Online portals that allow for:
    - electronic referrals to assessors and service providers;
    - providers to manage the information displayed on service finders.
- Commencement of the Commonwealth Home Support Program
- Home Care Packages – consumer directed care applied to all packages

**For more detailed information about the [recent changes](http://www.dss.gov.au/agedcarereform) go to [www.dss.gov.au/agedcarereform](http://www.dss.gov.au/agedcarereform)  
To access [My Aged Care](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) go to [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)**