

## **New aged care related initiatives in the Budget**

More choices for a longer life – Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) funding

**The Government will provide \$5.9 billion across two years from 2020-21 to extend the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) funding arrangements.**

**The CHSP contributes to essential home support services - such as meals (Meals on Wheels), personal care, nursing, domestic assistance, home maintenance and community transport - to assist older people to continue to live independently in their own home.**

**Funding for these programs has already been included in the forward estimates.**

ACSA commentary: The announcement offers CHSP providers a welcome guarantee of funding for a further two years. They will now be able to secure leases and extend staffing contracts for a further two years, arrangements that have been on hold pending some guarantee of an extension of the funding arrangements.

What is unclear is if there is any new (growth) money to meet the significant demand for various service types. Many providers are at capacity for services such as domestic assistance, garden maintenance and transport.

It also leaves the issue of creating an integrated home care and support program on the shelf. Given the synergy between the programs this still needs to be pursued, as long as people who need to access low level supports can still access them as well as meeting the needs for Home Care Packages (HCPs).

Better quality of care: aged care compliance improvements

**There were three announcements in the Budget that provided a clearer budgetary commitment to compliance outcomes. They included:**

- 1. \$38.4 million across five years from 2018-19 to strengthen aged care regulation through the establishment of a risk-based compliance and information sharing system in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.**

ACSA commentary: This commitment addresses strengthening regulation across the aged care system, covering the CHSP, Home Care Packages (HCPs) and residential aged care. We understand it involves the development of algorithms and IT to strengthen a risk-based approach and risk profiling systems.

- 1. \$7.7 million over two years from 2018-19 to develop an end-to-end compliance framework for the Home Care program, including the increased auditing and monitoring of home care providers**
- 2. \$5.6 million in 2019-20 to commence the implementation of an enhanced home care compliance framework to improve the quality and safety of home care services and enhance the integrity of the home care system.**

ACSA commentary: We understand the above two measures involve strengthened audit programs and expanded Department of Health and Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission capacity to monitor compliance of the HCP program. We are seeking further details on these.

**\$3.4 million across two years from 2019-20 for the Aged Care Quality and Safety**

**Commission to address the use of chemical restraints and the inappropriate use of antibiotics in residential aged care facilities.**

ACSA commentary: This measure aligns with the 30 March media release from Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care, The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP in which he announced strengthened restraint regulations, and which has since been followed up with the release of the Quality of Care Amendment (Minimising the Use of Restraints) Principles 2019 that address both physical and chemical restraint practices. ACSA is looking at the issue of consent for chemical restraint to ensure there are no gaps between GPs and aged care homes.

**\$2.6 million in 2019-20 to provide additional support for the implementation of the Aged Care Workforce Strategy.**

ACSA commentary: Government is indicating it is committed to improving the quality of aged care services by working with industry to build an aged care workforce that will meet future needs.

This initiative is said to support the newly established Aged Care Workforce Industry Council, in which ACSA is playing a critical role. There is also funding to address interface issues between health and aged care, bringing together Primary Health Networks (PHNs), acute care and aged care services to look at these issues.

In addition, there is funding for an online training module for managers.

ACSA advocated strongly in its Pre-Budget Submission and the witness statement to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety that aged care residents have the same right as all older Australians to critical health services. Having highlighted the many issues in ensuring these equal rights, we are pleased to see a measure designed to examine and begin addressing this critical interface.

**\$1.5 million in 2019-20 to undertake preparatory work for the introduction of a new Serious Incident Response Scheme from July 2022, which will require residential care providers to report a broader range of incidents occurring in their facilities.**

ACSA commentary: This is a reannouncement of the Government's intent. A consultation paper has just been released and we will be engaging with members as we shape our response.

**Previously announced**

**\$282.4 million across five years from 2018-19 for the release of an additional 10,000 HCPs across the four package levels.**

ACSA commentary: The additional 10,000 HCPs were announced - at a cost of \$282.4 million - as part of a \$662 million announcement for aged care in February 2019.

**\$320 million in 2018-19 for a one-off increase to the basic subsidy for residential aged care recipients.**

ACSA commentary: This was announced in February 2019 as part of a \$662 million investment in aged care. It was a one-off general subsidy boost for residential aged care providers – effectively, a 9.5 per cent increase in the basic Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI), Resident Classification Scale (RCS) and respite subsidies for residential aged care providers - for the period 20 March-30 June 2019.

**\$4.6 million over two years from 2018-19 to trial a residential care needs assessment funding tool as an alternative to the existing ACFI.**

ACSA commentary: [This was announced in February 2019 as part of the \\$662 million aged care package.](#)

**\$7.4 million across three years from 2018-19 to support aged care providers to better manage their finances through the provision of business advisory services.**

ACSA commentary: [This was announced in February 2019 as part of the \\$662 million aged care package.](#)

**\$8.4 million over five years from 2018-19 to introduce mandatory reporting against national residential care quality indicators for pressure sores, use of physical restraint, weight loss, falls and fractures, and medication management.**

ACSA commentary: [This was largely previously announced, but tonight - as part of another measure - Government announced an additional two indicators \(falls and fractures and medication management\).](#)

**\$35.7 million across five years from 2018-19 for an increase to the dementia and veterans' home care supplements to support home care recipients who require additional care to stay in their homes longer.**

ACSA commentary: [On 15 February, the Department updated its website to announce that there would be an increase in the Dementia and Cognition and Veterans Supplements - from 10 per cent of the basic home care subsidy of a HCP to 11.5 per cent - to commence from 20 March \(updated Schedule of Fees announcement\).](#)

**\$7.1 million over two years from 2018-19 to improve payment administration arrangement for HCPs to address stakeholder concerns regarding unspent funds and align home care arrangements with other government programs, such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Government will consult with stakeholders on the implementation of these improved payment administration arrangements.**

ACSA commentary: [We will be seeking more information and clarity on this initiative.](#)

**Guaranteeing Medicare — strengthening primary care. The Government will:**

- 1. provide \$448.5 million over the three years from 2020-21 for a new chronic disease care funding model that will provide additional funding to participating practices to better support high-needs patients; and**
- 2. provide \$201.5 million over five years from 2018-19 to promote quality improvements in General Practice by increasing the amount of funding for the revised Practice Incentive Program Quality Incentive and maintaining the current aged care incentive.**

ACSA commentary: [More detail is needed on these initiatives, but ensuring GPs engage with aged care is important.](#)

**Investing in health and medical research - Medical Research Future Fund, 10-year investment plan.**

**Mission: The Government will commit a further \$1.2 billion for a total of \$1.4 billion**

allocated under the investment plan for long term investments in health and medical research to address complex and sizeable health issues requiring a concerted effort to transition great ideas through to proof-of-concept and beyond, which includes:

1. **Ageing, and Aged Care and Dementia Mission - a new investment of \$185 million.**

ACSA commentary: [This funding package was announced in a media release in December 2018. but any research is welcomed.](#)

**Integrated Carer Support Service - additional support for young carers. The Government will provide an additional \$84.3 million over four years from 2019-20 to expand the Integrated Carer Support Service. The additional funding will increase the availability of carer support, with young carers prioritised to enable continued participation in education and training. The additional funding will be provided to expand the Regional Delivery Partners network from 11 to 16 providers. The measure builds on the 2018-19 Budget measure titled Integrated Carer Support Services.**

ACSA commentary: [Supporting carers is important and, as such, this initiative is welcomed.](#)