



60,000 Support at Home Packages needed: CHA

Catholic Health Australia

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is calling on the Commonwealth Government to fund up to 60,000 additional Support at Home packages in the 2026-27 Budget to address a growing aged care waitlist that could see 200,000 older Australians waiting for care by June 2027.

In its pre-budget submission, CHA warned the lack of care packages is pushing older Australians into higher-cost hospital and residential care settings.

"The government's commitment to Support at Home is being undermined by insufficient funding for the packages older Australians desperately need," said Alex Lynch, Director of Aged Care at Catholic Health Australia.

"Many of our parents, grandparents and neighbours simply want to age at home with dignity. They must be empowered to do so."

CHA estimates that funding an additional 25,000 to 60,000 fully funded Support at Home packages would require Commonwealth investment of approximately \$1.0 billion to \$2.4 billion per year, based on an average package cost of \$40,000 per person per year.

According to an independent review of residential aged care, the sector will need at least 10,600 additional operational places per year over the next two decades, equivalent to opening a new residential aged care home every three days.

"A staged expansion of funded Support at Home packages would materially reduce waitlists, improve access to care for higher-need older Australians, and reduce avoidable hospitalisations and premature entry into residential aged care which is more expensive for taxpayers and worse for the individuals involved," said Mr Lynch.

The submission also calls for increased care management funding, extra funding for assessments to address demand surges, and a deferral of price caps in favour of more effective consumer protections to ensure the Support at Home system can deliver effective, timely care.

“Our suggestions, on behalf of a Catholic providers, offer a pragmatic, realistic path towards addressing the complex demand challenge,” said Mr Lynch.

CHA acknowledges the Government's positive response to its request for higher accommodation supplements to support less well-off Australians receiving residential aged care.

“Increasing supplements by \$5 to \$25 per resident is a first step in meeting the needs of this vulnerable cohort of the population, and we will seek more clarity around the implementation of these measures,” Mr Lynch said.

“Right now accommodation funding simply doesn’t cover the cost of maintaining buildings, refurbishing rooms and keeping facilities safe and comfortable for residents, and the shortfall is already contributing to hospital discharge delays. The Government’s recent announcements will help, though we hope to see more in the budget.

“Services caring for the highest number of low-income residents are under the greatest financial pressure. Targeted uplifts help protect access to care while broader pricing reforms are finalised.”

The submission proposes significant reforms to strengthen integration between health and aged care systems, including establishment of a National Prevention Investment Fund, pilot programs integrating Support at Home with Hospital-in-the-Home models, and targeted housing-related tax concessions for aged care workers in high-need areas.

For more on CHA’s Budget policy positions, visit <https://cha.org.au/budget-26-27/>

Notes to editors: *Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia’s largest non-government, not-for-profit group of health, community, and aged care providers. Our members operate 80 hospitals in each Australian state and the ACT, providing around 30 per cent of private hospital care and 5 per cent of public hospital care, in addition to extensive community and residential aged care. There are 63 private hospitals operated by CHA members, including St Vincent’s, Calvary, Mater, St John of God and Cabrini. CHA members also provide approximately 12 per cent of all aged care facilities across Australia, in addition to around 20 per cent of home care services. 25 per cent of our members’ service provision is regional, rural and remote.*

Media contacts:

Charlie Moore: 0452 606 171