

Commonwealth Home Support Program

28 May 2014

The Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) has released its discussion paper titled *Key directions for the Commonwealth Home Support Programme*, which details proposed changes to the Commonwealth's basic support for older Australians.

The discussion paper is available [here](#).

Consultation

Members are encouraged to read the discussion paper and contribute formally to the consultation.

Individual submissions can be emailed to the Department of Social Services via chsp@dss.gov.au, no later than Monday 30 June. A submission template has been provided and is available from the DSS [website](#).

The VHA will be providing a submission and members are invited to provide input to policyandstrategy@vha.org.au by **close of business, Monday 23 June**. Alternatively the contact details of relevant VHA staff are listed at the bottom of this document.

Changes to HACC – the Victorian context

A number of existing HACC programmes will be merged and provided under the new Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP). However, as the Victorian arrangements for the provision of HACC services differ from those in other jurisdictions, specific arrangements for the coming years will be in place in this state. Key elements relating to the provision of Victorian HACC services are listed below:

- The DSS and Victorian Department of Health (DH) are currently developing a roadmap document that will detail the complete transition of HACC services to the Commonwealth. This document is to be endorsed and released later in 2014
- DH estimates that approximately 25 per cent of Victorians under the age of 65 currently receiving HACC services will be eligible to transfer to the NDIS once operational; with the remaining 75 per cent to continue receiving HACC services funded by the Victorian Government and Commonwealth Government in the short to medium term
- There is a commitment that there will be no change to the basic quantum of HACC funding for three years from 1 July 2015.

Commonwealth Home Support Programme

The CHSP is proposed to incorporate many of the features of existing community-based aged care programmes, specifically:

- The Commonwealth HACC Program
- The National Respite for Carers Program
- The Day Therapy Centre Program
- The Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged Program.

The amalgamated functions of these programs will be provided under the CHSP. The target group for the CHSP will be:

- People aged 65 years and over (or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) who need basic assistance with daily living to remain living independently at home
- The carers of those listed above.

Eligibility and entry to the CHSP

Eligibility for the program will be based not solely on age, but on a person's assessed level of difficulty in carrying out activities of daily living without supervision or help. To be eligible for the CHSP a person must meet the following criteria, or care for someone who does:

- Be an older person aged 65 years and over (50 years for ATSI peoples)
- Have difficulty performing activities of daily living without help due to functional limitations
- Live in the community
- Have needs that do not exceed a basic support programme.

Entry to the CHSP will be organised via the My Aged Care Gateway. This will entail a shift from the current "no wrong door" approach. Clients will be required to undertake a centralised assessment before being referred either to a service provider or for a more in-depth assessment to be conducted by a regionally based assessment organisation in their home.

CHSP Service Types

The discussion paper proposes that care will be provided under a series of service groups or types, organised according to the outcome each aims to achieve. Where applicable, existing service types will be grouped under their relevant service group in the new CHSP. There are some existing programs or services that will not be continued (further information about discontinued programs and services is detailed below). The new service outcome groups include:

- Increased Independence
- Nutrition
- Social Participation
- Assistance at Home
- Access to the Community
- Care Relationships
- Sector Support and Development.

The discussion paper recognises that some compromises have been made with the service groupings, and DSS will be seeking and analysing sector feedback in regards to their appropriateness.

Details about which existing service programs sit under the new classifications are available in the attachments to the discussion paper.

Funding Arrangements

The National Aged Care Alliance has recommended, in the longer term, replacing the current output-based funding model with a mixed funding approach that includes:

- Individualised funding, based on assessed need, for services and support that assist the older person to identify and achieve their goals and live as independently as possible
- Block funding for:

- Services with substantial infrastructure and/ or capital elements and costs, such as home maintenance and modifications, centre-based services (including overnight accommodation), transport and volunteer services
- The creation of new and innovative services
- Service availability in areas (e.g. remote Australia) or for people (e.g. those with special needs) where there is limited or no competition between services and smaller populations.

However, the DSS has taken into account the pace of change being applied to the sector at present and has proposed that the NACA's recommendations **not** be implemented in the short- to medium-term. Ongoing consideration will be given by the Aged Care Sector Committee as to how a non-block funded system might be implemented, however these changes are not yet planned.

Contestability will be applied to the selection of the new Regional Assessment Services (that will conduct face-to-face assessments for My Aged Care) and Sector Support and Development roles (included under the Sector Support and Development service group) in advance of program commencement, with consideration given to:

- The ongoing transition of Victoria and WA HACC services to the Commonwealth
- Existing capacity to operate new services and programme infrastructure
- Whether all service types are suitable for tendering (e.g. Meals on Wheels where there is a high volunteer contribution)
- The feasibility of tendering minimally funded services (e.g. where an organisation receives less than \$50,000 per annum)
- Trialling different approaches to contestability (such as 'cashing out' respite funds to carers/consumers).

From 1 July 2015, more streamlined contractual arrangements with the DSS will be implemented. This will mean organisations will be funded through a single CHSP schedule. It is anticipated that the funding agreement will be for a three year period, commencing 1 July 2015.

From 1 July 2015, the expansion of funding of home support services will be underpinned by a CHSP framework and population based funds allocation model. This will take into account existing service providers in a given region, projected growth in the target population and other factors influencing service delivery supply and demand.

Activities No Longer in Scope

A number of functions currently delivered under HACC Service Group Two will now be carried out by My Aged Care. Transition arrangements will be put in place for these services that will be no longer in scope.

Assessment will be funded under My Aged Care, and organisations that are currently funded to provide assessment under the Commonwealth HACC program will be able to apply to become part of the My Aged Care Regional Assessment workforce. Further information regarding these opportunities will be available in mid-2014.

Case management and client care coordination will no longer be funded through the CHSP. Case management can in some cases be provided after a face-to-face assessment by the Regional Assessment organisation, and there will be a degree of discretion available to service providers to



refer clients in need of care coordination for a face-to-face assessment to determine how their needs might be accommodated.

It is important to note that the three year funding guarantee for detailed above will apply to programs currently provided under HACC Service Group Two.

Carer Respite Services

The DSS will be working through 2014 to determine how the new system might cater for the needs of carers. These discussions will likely include a focus on the needs of carers across the community, including the disability and aged sectors.

The VHA has been advised that while the discussion paper does not detail arrangements for the carer respite sector, the DSS is interested in the sector's views as to how the needs of carers can be best met. The VHA will continue its contact with the DSS to further the sector's position on carer respite services and encourages member agencies currently providing these services to engage with the DSS via this discussion paper and related submissions.

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