Older Australians to have more say in delivery of home care services

The Minister for Aged Care, Ken Wyatt, AM, MP, today launched *Increasing Choice in Home Care*, which gives consumers more choice in home care services – such as personal care, nursing and social support – to suit their individual needs.

Mr Wyatt said the major reform will improve the way services are delivered to older people in their homes.

“Changes to Home Care Packages, starting today, mean that funding for home care will – for the first time – follow the consumer, not the provider,” he said.

“This major change allows older Australians to direct funding to the provider of their choice to meet their particular needs.

“If their care needs are not being met they can change providers more easily.

“This will result in service providers offering more flexible, personalised services that put older people and their families at the centre of the delivery of high-quality, innovative home care.”

Over the next year more than 100,000 consumers will benefit from the new consumer-driven services allowing them to direct funding to an approved provider of their choice.

Other important changes in *Increasing Choice in Home Care* are:

- Funding for home care is portable. For example, if a person living in Melbourne decides to move to Perth to be closer to their family, the home care package will be portable to move interstate.
- If consumers change their provider, any unspent funds in the account – less any account fees – will go with them to a new home care provider.
- Processes to become an approved provider will be streamlined, however, new providers will continue to be required to demonstrate their suitability and meet quality standards.
A range of consumer information to help older people make an informed choice is available on the My Aged Care website. Consumers can also call 1800 200 422 to talk to someone about these changes.

Mr Wyatt said: “Today’s announcement is fundamentally about increasing consumer choice and control, however, it is also about reforming, renewing and revitalising our aged-care system.

“We are undertaking these changes so that older people – the people who helped build this nation to make it what it is today – can have more say in getting the care they need and deserve.

“The changes that I have announced today represent a major cultural change in the delivery of aged care.

“Consumers and their carers will be looking for an aged care business that best understands their needs.

“Providers will need to adapt and innovate to meet this challenge and grasp the opportunities that go with it.”

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