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MEDIA RELEASE

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6,000 extra high need home care packages and \$20 million My Aged Care revamp

The Turnbull Government has announced major initiatives in home care services and improved access to the My Aged Care system, as it releases the report of the Legislated Review of Aged Care 2017.

An additional 6,000 home care packages will be made available to support more older Australians with higher care needs to remain living in the comfort of their own homes.

At the same time, support for aged care consumers will be streamlined through a \$20 million investment in the My Aged Care information system, to improve public access, especially for rural, regional and remote clients.

Information from the new national home care priority queue is now also available to consumers, developed as part of February 2017 Increasing Choice in Home Care reforms.

Under the reforms, home care packages are released to consumers who have the most urgent needs or have been waiting the longest, for Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 packages.

For the first time, the queue system provides clarity for consumers, while also allowing the Government to track demand for home care and adjust supply where required, to ensure older Australians get the care they need.

It should be noted that the original ratios of Level 1, 2, 3 and 4 home care packages were set by the then Labor government, under the Living Longer Living Better initiative.

Now, thanks to the Turnbull Government reforms, a substantial number of people have been identified as waiting for the higher level 3 and 4 care, many of whom faced uncertainty under the old arrangements.

The Legislated Review of Aged Care 2017, led by David Tune AO, PSM, examined the effectiveness of the aged care reforms enacted by the previous Labor Government through the 2012 *Living Longer Living Better* package and his report includes 38 recommendations for future aged care provision.

The Turnbull Government welcomes the review which was required under legislation and will consider the recommendations. However, we do not support recommendations 13 and 15.

The Government will not include the full value of the owner's home in the means test for residential care, nor remove the annual and lifetime caps on means-tested fees.

As the recommendations are worked through, one of the primary considerations will also be to ensure improved aged care services to allow older Australians to continue living in regional, rural and remote areas.

The Government will consider the Tune Review's findings and recommendations, in the context of work underway by a taskforce in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, examining ageing more broadly.

The Productivity Commission recently forecast Australia will need almost one million aged care staff by 2050, a skilled workforce is essential to support quality care and continuing reform.

A detailed aged care workforce strategy will be produced by a taskforce, to be chaired by Professor John Pollaers, supported by a \$2 million 2017-18 Budget commitment.

The Government's robust work on aged care reform will ensure that the people who built this nation have the aged care support and services they need, when and where they need it.

This is focussed on maintaining a high-quality, people-centred aged care system that provides older Australians with choice and control of their care and is affordable and sustainable for consumers, taxpayers and care providers.

The Turnbull Government has allocated a record \$18.6 billion for aged care in 2017-18, the first part of a \$100 billion investment in aged care support planned for the next five years.

This includes \$5.5 billion to extend the Commonwealth Home Support Program until 2020, to provide services including Meals On Wheels, transport, personal assistance and home maintenance, and \$2 million for an industry led taskforce to develop an aged care workforce strategy.

For further information about the Review go to:
<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/reform/aged-care-legislated-review>.

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