

AGED CARE: ACHIEVING REFORM

CHOICE AND QUALITY CARE FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS

An aged care system which provides all older people with the choice of community or residential aged care services when they need them is based on having quality sustainable aged care services available across the country and into the future.

The recent Productivity Commission (PC) Report *Caring for Older Australians* provides a blueprint for providing choice and quality care which strikes the right balance between individual responsibility, affordability for taxpayers and a safety net for those who need it.

AGED CARE REFORM IS URGENTLY NEEDED

Structural reform in the aged care sector is urgently needed to ensure that there will be the services available to meet the needs of our ageing population and to meet community expectations about service quality, choice and access.

By 2050, over 3.5 million older Australians will need to access aged care services each year compared with over 1 million now.

REFORM IMPLEMENTATION AND THE 2012-13 BUDGET

For the 2012-13 Federal Budget, a start needs to be made on the reforms that are critical for real change to occur and to respond to community expectations.

They are:

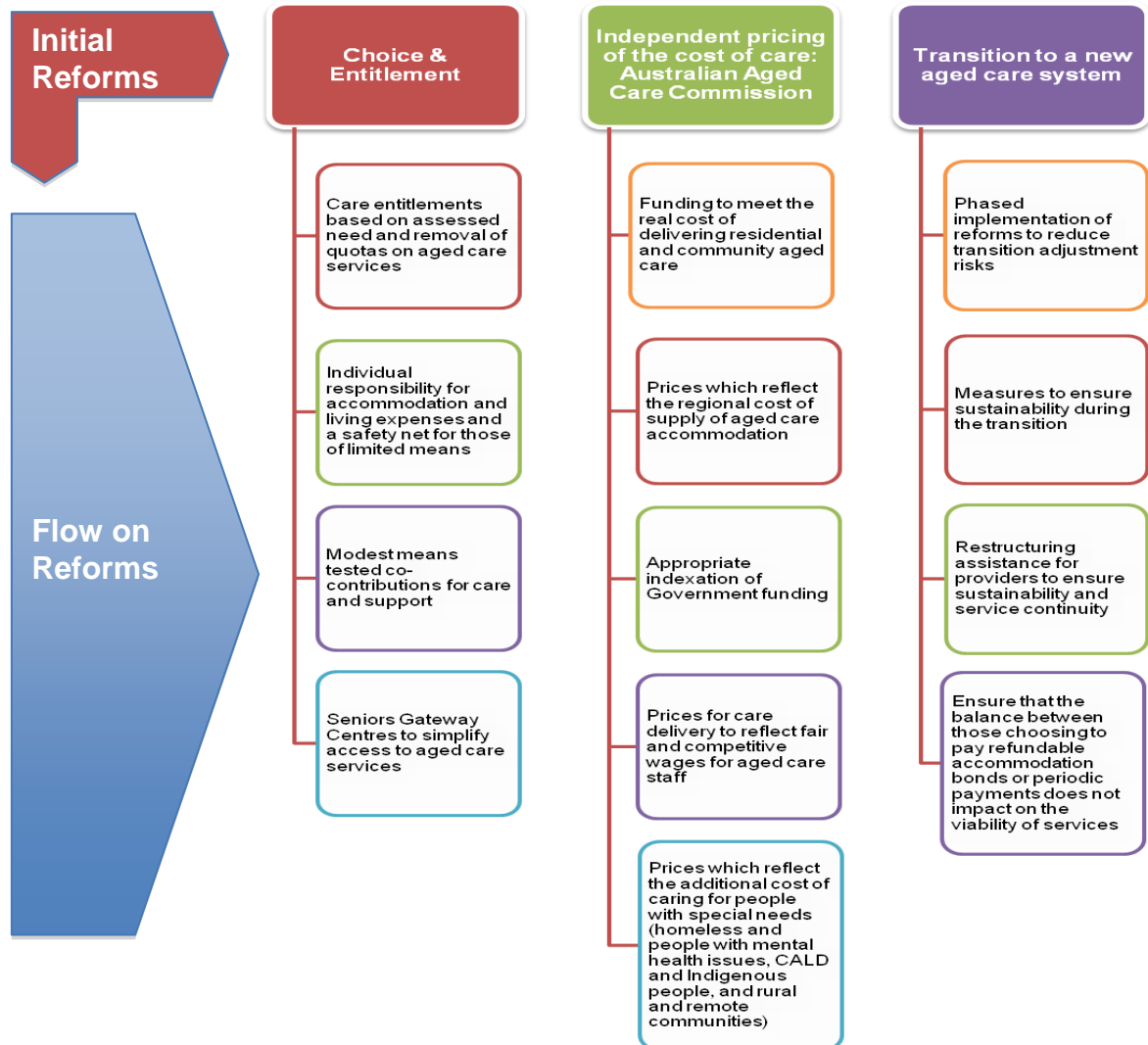
- A publicly announced commitment and timetable for the implementation of an aged care system based on care entitlements and choice so the community and the sector can plan for the changes.
- Moving quickly to establish Seniors Gateway Centres which will be a more effective and efficient way of providing information and assessment services to older Australians and simplifying access to services.
- Responding to older people's preference to age at home by increasing the supply of community care services pending the introduction of care entitlements.
- Initiating an independent cost of care study to determine the real cost of providing care services including fair and competitive wages for aged care staff - pending the establishment of the Australian Aged Care Commission (AACC).
- Provide the capital needed for the renewal and expansion of residential high care services by increasing the accommodation supplement for residents with limited or no assets to reflect regional costs of supply and allowing providers to set market-based accommodation prices for non-supported residents.

BROAD SECTOR AGREEMENT

There is widespread support across aged care providers, consumer groups, unions and health care professionals for the broad shape of the PCs reforms. These groups are working closely through the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) to ensure that reform becomes a reality.

A SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY TO PROVIDE CHOICE AND ACCESS

Recognising that government policies and regulations do not operate independently of each other, ACSA has developed a reform model - based on the PC recommendations - with substantial flow on benefits that it sees as the most efficient way of ensuring that quality sustainable aged care services are available across the country well into the future.



FURTHER INFORMATION

- Heather Witham: 0437 911 276

Email: hwitham@agedcare.org.au

Aged and Community Services Australia is the national peak body for aged and community care providers representing faith based, charitable and community-based organisations who provide residential and community care services, housing and supported accommodation to over 1 million older people, younger people with a disability and their carers. ACSA, the six State and Territory Associations and over 1,100 organisations together make up the ACSA Federation.



Aged & Community Services Australia
 Level 1, 11-19 Bank Place Melbourne 3000
 Ph: 03 9670 5900 Fax: 03 9670 6400 Email: hwitham@agedcare.org.au www.agedcare.org.au