



## Media Release

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### Care missing from Government's aged care agenda

Delays in aged care assessments reported in Adelaide are another example of the enduring concerns confronting elderly Australians and service providers, according to Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA).

ACSA CEO Greg Mundy said the plight of the elderly in need of care and support was starting to hit home as it becomes increasingly apparent that services cannot keep up with demand.

"The media's focus on aged care issues in South Australia, and recently in Western Australia, is very welcome and long overdue," Mr Mundy said. "Insufficient appropriate accommodation when and where people need it, falls in community care hours, lower rates of pay for aged care workers, and delays in assessment are all part of the same problem – an aged care system struggling to survive because of inadequate funding linked to an onerous regulatory system.

"Our sector has long been campaigning for reform and now with the release of the National Health and Hospitals' Reform Commission recommendations there is some hope in sight. Indeed our conversations with the Minister and other members of Government have been very positive.

"But more needs to be done today to relieve the current crisis, to say nothing of planning for a future where elderly Australians are set to comprise a quarter of the population. The Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot, makes constant reference to the Government's record levels of funding without acknowledging Australia has record numbers of older people."

Aged and Community Services SA & NT CEO Alan Graham said it was distressing to hear of elderly people waiting for prolonged periods just to be assessed.

"Delays assessing people in urgent need of care has widespread repercussions," he said. "Not the least of which is the distress it causes elderly people and their families. This in turn has a detrimental impact on their well being. Without proper assessment many elderly people are confined to hospital beds when they should be receiving care in a more appropriate environment."

Mr Graham said the complexities involved in accessing aged care added to an already difficult situation. "Getting old is part of life and for some of us, many of us, residential care will be necessary. It is another part of our lives, another place we will call home. We plan for each phase of our lives and getting older isn't any different, until we realise there maybe nowhere for us to live."

Mr Mundy and Mr Graham said widespread community recognition and support for aged care issues was critical. "Without it, the future will be very bleak indeed."

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