

MEDIA RELEASE

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Aged care on the sick list

The Campaign for Care of Older Australians (CCOA) has written to State and Territory leaders to urge their support for aged care to be treated as a priority during next week's COAG meeting.

"Aged care is on the sick list and won't get better until governments treat the illness, not just some of the symptoms," CCOA said.

"Victorian Premier John Brumby acknowledged the serious deficiencies in the aged care system during his Canberra address today. He correctly stated that new beds are not being built because the federal funding formula is not right.

"We have asked Mr Brumby and his counterparts across Australia to support better outcomes for older people which can, in part, be achieved through the right terms of reference for the long awaited Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care.

"The terms of reference must include setting and maintaining realistic funding levels for all the care people need as they age, including user contributions for those with a capacity to contribute to the cost of their care and accommodation. Without these measures there will not be enough aged care services to support the rest of our hospital and health care system.

"Older people deserve access to high quality services; the ability to exercise choice in how their needs are met and not to have to spend a day longer than they need to in hospital.

"The proposals put forward by the Prime Minister go some way towards addressing the issues confronting residential and community aged care services. The Federal Government taking responsibility for aged care is a vital first step. But the Productivity Commission inquiry, coming after many others, must now firmly establish a sustainable system which really is geared to deliver access and choice to older people and their families.

"Current care subsidies and capital funding arrangements do little more than provide a drip feed for aged care services. Without an increase in funding and without funding that is needed, the problem will only worsen as the same services struggle to provide care and support for greater numbers of older people.

"Aged care needs radical treatment to restore it to good health now."

CCOA comprises 11 national organisations providing community and residential aged care and housing.

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Aged & Community Services Australia, Aged Care Association Australia, Anglicare Australia, Baptist Care Australia, Catholic Health Australia, Churches of Christ Living Care, Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Homes, Lutheran Aged Care Australia, The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus, The National Presbyterian Aged Care Network, UnitingCare Australia