



ACSA National Conference
A Consumer Perspective on Aged care
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Consumer Views on the Next Decade for Aged Care

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Aged Care Should

The aim of aged care should be to:

- Help customers maintain independent, contributory, goal focused living
- Assist with maintaining optimal health
- Support chosen family, friends, neighbours and/ other informal carers

Consumer Expectations

We talk to consumers and they tell us they want:

- Independence – helping me keep active and involved
- Consumer choice and direction – the services I need, provided how best meets my needs

Consumer Expectations ...2

- Flexibility – support needs to adapt to my living requirements as they change
- Dignity – my needs and preferences respected

Consumer Concerns

And the concerns they have about how things are now:

- Administrative maze of health & aged services
- Losing what independence they have
- Lack of communication with them
- Lack of choice and control

Consumer Concerns ...2

- Quality and quantity of support offered
- Take it or leave it offerings
- Variability of services and access
- Lack of support for informal care network
- Have to get worse to get services

Consumer Concerns ...3

- Lack of partnership between aged care, health & other services
- Consumers opinions not sought
- Provision of care driven by framework and interests of provider
- Why can't I get urgent assistance with small simple tasks?

Consumer Concerns ...4

- No flexibility for me in the way services are delivered
- I need community transport that works
- Its very difficult to get easy access to timely and reliable information

A New Vision for Aged Care

Every older Australian is able to live with dignity and independence in a place of their choosing; with a choice of appropriate and affordable support and care services as and when they need them

Underpinning Principles

Older Australians are entitled to:

- live active, contributory and fulfilling lives
- have their individual and collective needs fully and equitably considered when governments are making decisions about health, housing, transport and other community services

Underpinning Principles ...2

- make decisions for themselves, in conjunction with chosen family and friends where appropriate
- be treated with equity and fairness regardless of cultural background, geographic location, health, gender, sexuality and capacity, including their capacity to communicate needs

Underpinning Principles ...3

- the removal of barriers and systemic limitations affecting the realisation of any of these principles

Underpinning Principles ...4

Where older Australians require support or care, they will:

- have access to services in their own communities and homes that:
 - are readily available, affordable and client-directed
 - promote wellness and wellbeing, and assist them in realising their aspirations

Underpinning Principles ...5

- provide genuine choice to meet the aspirations, needs and preferences of a diverse older population
- are underpinned by a commitment to quality improvement, evaluation and ongoing research

Underpinning Principles ...6

- be the principal decision makers about when they may need assistance and the nature of that assistance
- have access to affordable, effective and safe health and medical care
- have easy access to reliable and relevant information about the availability, quality and cost of aged care services.



So to the Reform Agenda

Fundamental reform is necessary to achieve this vision.

The elements of reform needed for better care and support of older people are:

The Elements of Reform

1. Promoting a society for all ages

- high priority, well resourced and comprehensive initiatives to:
 - promote new and inspiring paradigms of the roles of ageing in our society, consistent with our Underpinning Principles
 - stimulate positive and inspirational representations of ageing
 - combat all forms of ageism

The Elements of Reform ...2

- a commitment to raising the profile of aged care and support by presenting positive images to demonstrate its significant contribution to enhancing the well being of older people
- acknowledgement that optimum care and support can only be achieved with significant improvements to other key public infrastructure, including government commitment to achieving crucial elements, including:

The Elements of Reform ...3

- adequate public housing and support services;
- mandatory adaptable, accessible and sustainable design standards for all housing;
- an integrated public and community transport system, designed to comprehensively support and accommodate the needs and aspirations of the entire community, including older people;
- urban design that ensures integrated public and living environments that are safe and accessible for all ages and promote active involvement in community life

The Elements of Reform ...4

2. Consumer focused, user friendly and equitable

- funding for care and support services linked to each recipient so that the recipient and their family can determine how and where they receive their care and support, including the option to control how their funding entitlement is used

The Elements of Reform ...5

- removal of the current regulatory restrictions on the quantity and type of services providers can offer so that they can be more responsive to older people's preferences
- accessible and reliable information on the availability, quality and cost of care and support services provided through a range of portals linked to comprehensive, integrated, consistent and current data on a user-designed data platform that supports informed consumer decision-making

The Elements of Reform ...6

- a well-resourced national aged care assessment system which achieves consistent and equitable outcomes and provides high quality, rapid, seamless and appropriate assessments based on multi-disciplinary skills, taking into account each person's history and circumstances

The Elements of Reform ...7

- robust community-based support networks and arrangements designed to work with and strengthen individuals' capabilities and build on community and family networks and other social ties
- flexible care and support services designed around and responsive to the varied situations, lifestyles, needs, preferences and aspirations of older people

The Elements of Reform ...8

- readily accessible participatory processes and structures that enable consumer involvement in aged care and support decision-making at all levels, supported by well resourced consumer advocacy services

The Elements of Reform ...9

3. Entitlement to robust community care is front and centre – within a seamless continuum of care services

- the separation of funding for support and care services and for accommodation, so that choices about each are as far as possible independent of each other, enabling greater options and choices in both services and housing

The Elements of Reform ...10

- the same care fees and subsidies across residential and community care for people with similar care needs to help with the exercise of equitable and free choice over where care and support is received, including the option of continuing to receive care in the community as needs change
- responsive and adaptable respite and temporary care and support options available as needed and sufficient transition, convalescent and rehabilitation services and facilities to meet need

The Elements of Reform ...11

- all levels and forms of services allow and enable older people to enter, leave and, most importantly, re-enter as needed
- a variety of housing and residential care and other supportive accommodation options that meet adaptability, accessibility and sustainability standards sanctioned by government, supplied by a variety of government, charitable and private providers in a range of types and standards which include sufficient accommodation for those who do not have the means to self-provide

The Elements of Reform ...12

- genuine integration of all aged care and support services within a more seamless continuum of health services from primary, to planned and emergency acute, to restorative; all equitably accessible by older people without discrimination
- access to appropriate and high quality palliative and end-of-life support and care from the earliest appropriate opportunity

The Elements of Reform ..13

4. Properly funded and flexibly and equitably financed

- funding provided to individuals as an entitlement based on assessed needs, rather than being subject to quotas
- funding for care and support based on regularly updated independent benchmarking of the cost of providing care and support in an environment where recipients have full choice of such services

The Elements of Reform ...14

- user contributions to the costs of support and care services to be nationally consistent, transparent, equitable and affordable - with a variety of payment methods available
- no-one should be denied access to support and care due to financial incapacity

The Elements of Reform ...15

- flexible payment options for the cost of supportive accommodation options, including residential care, which provide genuine choice in how user contributions are made (e.g. loans, periodic payment, deferred contributions, rent), using a statutory framework to ensure transparency, security and like for like comparability in an environment where care recipients have full choice of services

The Elements of Reform ...16

- A dynamic and resourced workforce planning regime with adequate funding to ensure sufficient skilled, appropriately qualified and competitively remunerated staff are attracted to and retained in aged care and respected for their work

The Elements of Reform ...17

5. A framework of support for informal carers and families

- formal acknowledgement and improved support for families, friends and community carers, including the development of long-term strategies to address their diminishing numbers in light of Australia's changing demographics
- Acknowledgement that family and informal carers have the right to cease carer roles for short periods or permanently

The Elements of Reform ...18

6. Continuous improvement and quality control

- optimum services continuously improved through shared learning founded on evidence-based practice and well-supported research programs which investigate all facets of ageing and of caring for older people

The Elements of Reform ...19

- funding for services that includes provision for optimal levels of continuing and recognised training and development for all staff and volunteers in aged care.
- a competitively robust and dynamic accreditation system for approved ethical age care providers across the full range of aged care services including community, home, respite, and short and long term living options

The Elements of Reform ...18

- an independent national complaints service that meets the Australian Standard and is based on fostering feedback and complaints mechanisms from service level up, focused on prompt complaints resolution, enhanced learning and service and system improvement

The Elements of Reform ...19

- a monitoring and compliance regime that actively fosters consumer involvement in proactively identifying service quality issues, fully protects all informants and acts promptly and appropriately to identify, verify and correct malpractice, abuse and poor quality service

Reform Implementation

Implementation of these reforms will require broad support and the involvement of all stakeholders including most importantly representatives of and advocates for older people, aged care providers, industry and finance experts, and of course the Federal Government.

Reform Implementation ...2

The complexity of aged care now and into the future will necessitate transitional regulatory arrangements and funding to move from where we are now to the vision outlined in this paper.

Conclusion ...

To meet seniors needs for care and support we need to:

- Seek to strengthen homes and communities so that people can manage their lives and achieve their continuing goals and ambitions in illness and disability as well as in good health and wellbeing

Conclusion ...2

- Make access to aged care an entitlement attaching to the individual, not to providers or geographic regions
- Older Australians deserve a care system that enables the same freedoms, choices and support as all other Australians

Conclusion ...3

Every older Australian is able to live with dignity and independence in a place of their choosing; with a choice of appropriate and affordable support and care services as and when they need them

Postscript

- This presentation is based on the “Vision for Aged Care” document adopted by the COTA National Policy Council in May 2009.
- That policy has now being further developed and improved in a working party of the National Aged Care Alliance which brings together consumer and provider expertise. It will be released soon after 18 September 2009.

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