

MEDIA RELEASE

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Health Reform Points to Aged Care

Aged care is about providing choice and access to services supported by a sustainable system not only the 2000-3000 older Australians needing support to leave hospital. The Campaign for the Care of Older Australians (CCOA) group welcomed the Prime Minister's reference to aged care as part of today's health debate with the Leader of the Opposition.

"However, while Mr Rudd said he wanted to take full responsibility for primary and aged care services his most detailed reference concerned only transition care.

"If the Federal Government intends to focus on preventative health "from school age up" and an integrated health system, Australians need to know what that means for aged care.

"Older Australians need to be reassured that they will be able to choose when and where they receive aged care services; and those services have to be accessible and sustainable. "Aged care providers, older people and their families are well and truly ready for the finger pointing to end. They are ready for the dramatic changes needed to make aged care a viable and accessible system able to meet a range of needs.

"More than one million older people receive support every day. That number will continue to rise as our population rises.

"We support the Prime Minister's view that there is no quick fix when it comes to health and hospital reform, of which aged care is a vital component.

"But if we don't start today, tomorrow will be very bleak indeed for millions of older Australians."

CCOA said the Federal Government could begin the process by announcing the terms of reference for the Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care, promised almost eight months ago.

The group has urged reforms including an entitlement based on assessed needs; greater choice of services; provision for special needs groups; and flexible payment options for accommodation.

CCOA comprises 11 national organisations providing community and residential care.

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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