

MEDIA RELEASE

26 June 2013

Aged care reforms finally passed - older Australians will now get the care and support they deserve

COTA Australia has welcomed the passage through Parliament today of the *Living Longer, Living Better* aged care reforms, saying the reforms will provide older Australians better quality care over which they will have greater control and choice, in a fairer and more sustainable aged care system.

COTA Chief Executive Ian Yates said the passage of the LLLB Bills was a victory for the unprecedented alliance of older people and families, aged care nurses and workers, health professionals and committed aged care providers who have pushed for these reforms over the past four years.

"We congratulate the thousands of older people in COTA's membership and beyond who gave politicians a message they could not ignore – 'fix aged care' – we deserve the right to age well!" Mr Yates said.

"We thank our colleagues in the National Aged Care Alliance whose unity, persistence and professionalism have been a major factor in getting to today's achievement.

"The Federal Government's '*Living Longer, Living Better*' Bills will significantly improve the lives of older Australians now and in the future.

"Hundreds of thousands of frailer older Australians will receive support and care at home than would have done under the current system. That is what most older people want and need," he said.

Mr Yates said the reforms would also give older people more say in the kind of care they receive, where they receive it and from whom - through new Consumer Directed Care packages.

"When people do need or prefer residential care they will increasingly be able to access services that are better designed and provide better services and facilities as higher levels of residential care funding roll out over the next few years."

Mr Yates said the reforms increased government subsidies for pensioners and other people with limited means, and while there will be higher levels of user contributions from people who have the means to pay, for the first time there will be a more equitable system of user contributions that ensures people with the same means and the same needs will receive the same care and pay the same for it wherever they live in Australia.

"There will also be annual and lifetime caps on care contributions which is good news for everybody."

"It is very exciting to finally see these reforms go through as they set us on a path that is essential to ensure we meet the needs of our rapidly growing numbers of very old citizens," Mr Yates said.

Media contact: Ian Yates 0418 835 439, Jane Garcia 0434 489 533

COTA Australia is the peak policy development, advocacy and representation organisation for older Australians, representing COTAs in every State and Territory and through them over 500,000 older Australians.