



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **COTA Australia welcomes commitment to aged care reform in Federal Budget**

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia, the peak body for older Australians, welcomes the Albanese Government's strong commitment to aged care reform in the October Federal Budget.

"As in other important policy areas such as health, housing and employment, this Budget puts financial flesh on the bones of the Government's election commitments," said COTA Australia Chief Executive, Ian Yates.

"The Budget builds on the previous government's work to implement many of the recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission; extends measures that had only been short term funded; and funds the additional commitments Labor made during the federal election including to extend care hours, require 24 hour nursing cover, improve transparency and improve the quality of food and the meals experience in both residential and home care."

Mr Yates said COTA welcomes the very comprehensive scope of the aged care reform initiatives funded in this Budget, particularly:

- Higher pay for all aged care staff to follow from the work value case currently before the Fair Work Commission, for which the Government has already made a provision.
- At least 15,000 of the free TAFE training places being reserved for aged care to help address workforce pressures.
- The creation of a dedicated Age Care Complaints Commissioner in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.
- A substantial commitment of over \$310 million in the essential upgrading of IT infrastructure and systems to support the new Support at Home program, greater provider transparency and other reform measures.
- Full funding for 24 hour, 7 day nursing in all residential care services from 1 July 2023.
- Increasing the minutes of care for each aged care resident from the new average of 200 minutes (including 40 of nursing) required from 1 July 2023 to 215 minutes from 1 October 2024.
- Implementing a national personal care worker registration scheme and a Code of Conduct.
- Creating an independent Inspector General of Aged Care as recommended by the Royal Commission and getting the Office of the Inspector General started in 2022/23,
- Providing better food services using a four year funded program to support and train the sector.
- Implementation of the new Support at Home program by 1 July 2024, which will require testing and finalisation of the new single assessment service, design of the new service list and the IT systems needed to support greater choice, self-management, and transparency. In the meantime, the government will be moving to cap home care administration fees until unit pricing is introduced.
- Continuation of the Disability Support for Older Australians program from the end of 2022 to the end of 2023 - an essential but still transitional step to fully implementing the Royal Commission

recommendation for older Australians with severe disabilities to be treated in an equivalent way to the NDIS.

- Implementing new measures to establish enhanced financial and care service transparency of providers to both the government and older people seeking and using care
- Supporting the new Independent Hospitals and Aged Care Pricing Authority to be ready to recommend independently determined fair and reasonable service pricing by 1 July 2024

The Government has also extended COVID-19 support to the sector by a substantial \$845 million.

Mr Yates said: “Self-evidently much is being done and will be done in aged care reform with the nearly \$4 billion committed in this Budget, with aged care wage increases still to come. We congratulate not only Ministers Butler and Wells on their hard work so far, but also the evident commitment of the Prime Minister and Treasurer to this reform process being given priority.”

“Much more remains to be done to fully implement the Royal Commission recommendations and to achieve a world class aged care system of which all Australians can be proud and have confidence in,” said Mr Yates.

“In the lead up to the next Budget COTA will be strongly engaging on matters still under consideration, such as improving services for people with severe disability, and ensuring that the new Support at Home program really delivers for older people and their families.”

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