

REMAINING AT HOME IS OUR DESIRE

FEDERAL BUDGET HOME CARE ANNOUNCEMENTS WELCOMED BY REGION'S HEALTH SERVICES

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We're happier and healthier when we age at home rather than in a nursing home. That's why more Australians are seeking support via the Commonwealth's Home Care Packages Program to do just so.

As part of recent budget announcements, Treasurer Scott Morrison pledged an extra 1.6 billion dollars for the program which funds service and clinical care purchases to help seniors remain at home.

"The announcement was great news for seniors as more packages will become available," says Community Interlink Governance Chair, Suzanne Miller.

"There's a real trend towards our elderly wanting to stay at home. Largely because we all understand just how good it is for us."

But while 14,000 new packages will be released as a result of the spend, more than 100,000 people are already on a waiting list to get one. Ms Miller says, that's a big concern.

"When we look at the number of those on the waiting list already, we can see the huge short fall for those needing support who aren't yet getting it,"

"For Community Interlink as a health service consortium Home Care Package provider, that's a big issue,"

"It means that the frail aged within our communities aren't always able to access the most ideal health supports as they grow older."



Ms Miller also expressed concern about elderly members of the community who may not be aware that they are eligible for a Home Care Package or, who are unsure of to get one.

“A lot of people haven’t even heard of a Home Care Package,’ says Ms Miller.

“And they may well be entitled. A Home Care Package is an Australian Government funding subsidy that allows individuals to purchase services to enable them to live independently in their own home.’

“As health services we want to ensure that our elderly are aware about what they’re entitled to.”

Ms Miller said that the Home Care Package application process may be difficult if one has no prior knowledge about it.

“So we’ve tried to take the initiative to help people through this process by developing a ‘Five step guide to accessing a Home Care Package’, says Ms Miller.

“We’re also happy to assist people over the phone or in person if you’re unsure about any of the steps.”

A PDF copy of the five step guide to accessing a Home Care Package is attached and may be published in full or with cropping approved by Community Interlink.

“Home Care Packages go further than providing personal care services like showering and cooking,’ says Ms Miller.

“A person is able to purchase home modifications and equipment to meet their care needs. For example you may now need a wheelchair. Well the package can fund the purchase of that wheelchair as well as the installation of a ramp at your home so you have suitable access to your own home,’

“You may also like transport to support you to attend your appointments and social activities. This can also be funded through your package,’

“Home Care Packages are all about supporting us to live our fullest lives into our senior years in our own homes.”



The 18 Community Interlink Home Care health service consortium members include: Northeast Health Wangaratta, Gateway Health, Beechworth Health Service, Euroa Health, Nathalia District Hospital, Numurkah District Health Service, Benalla Health, Seymour Health, Yarrawonga Health, Mansfield District Hospital, GV Health, Indigo North Health, Yea & District Memorial Hospital, Albury Wodonga Health, Tallangatta Health Service, Nexus Primary Health, Alexandra District Hospital and Kilmore & District Hospital.

The consortium was officially rolled out across the region earlier this year.

To interview a Home Care Package recipient about how the program has supported them. Phone Community Interlink Marketing and Communications Coordinator Nadia Surace 0401 771 645, or email nadia.surace@gvhealth.org.au.

HOME CARE PACKAGES EXPLAINED

A Home Care Package is an Australian Government funding subsidy that allows individuals to purchase services to enable them to live independently in their own home.

Home Care Package recipients must select an approved provider, such as Community Interlink, to activate and manage their Home Care Package.

They may then purchase approved services with their funding package such as domestic support (meal preparation, cleaning, home modifications to meet care needs), transport, personal care (assistance with showering/bathing, getting in and out of bed, getting dressed/undressed), support to go shopping and run errands, allied health, medications management, home nursing, sourcing of hearing, mobility, visual and continence aides, support to attend social outings and events.

If a person is not eligible for a Home Care Package, they can purchase Home Care services privately via Community Interlink or other providers.

