



THE HON MARK BUTLER MP
MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND AGEING
MINISTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION
MINISTER ASSISTING THE PRIME MINISTER ON MENTAL HEALTH REFORM

Her Worship the Mayor of Marion, Felicity-Ann Lewis
President
Australian Local Government Association
8 Geils Court
DEAKIN ACT 2600

ALGA MAIL
ITEM No:
DATE RECEIVED: 26.10.12
FILE No:

Dear Mayor *Felicity-Ann*

I refer to your predecessor's letter of 3 September 2012 regarding the resolutions passed by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) at the 2012 National General Assembly of Local Government.

Resolution Number: 74

The Australian Government recognises that an adequately skilled and well-qualified workforce is essential to deliver quality aged care for the growing number of older Australians, some of whom have complex health needs.

Through the *Living Longer Living Better* aged care reform package, the Government will provide \$1.2 billion over five years to tackle critical shortages in the aged care workforce.

The Government is developing and implementing an aged care workforce productivity strategy in collaboration with the sector to ensure a skilled workforce is attracted and retained to meet growing demand. A new Workforce Compact, between government, unions and aged care providers, will improve the capacity of the aged care sector to attract and retain staff through:

- higher wages;
- improved career structures;
- enhanced training and education opportunities;
- improved career development and workforce planning; and
- better work practices.

Additional funding will be provided to aged care providers who sign up to the Compact. The Compact is being developed by a Strategic Workforce Advisory Group chaired by Commissioner Anne Gooley from Fair Work Australia, to ensure that workforce reforms lead to improvements in services for older people and benefits for the workforce.

The Compact will ensure a strong focus on addressing workforce pressures in regional, rural and remote areas, including action to improve the recruitment and retention and overall geographical distribution of aged care workers.

For those aged care providers that sign up to the Compact, funding will be available from 1 July 2013. Existing funding of around \$412 million under the Aged Care Workforce Fund will be redirected to support education and training initiatives.

Resolution Number: 77

Better planning of aged care services with a consumer focus and improved linkages between aged care and other services in the health system and the community is a priority for this Government.

Under the *Living Longer Living Better* aged care reform package, there will be a national and strategic review of planning regions for aged care services. The review of the aged care planning regions and the Home and Community Care (HACC) planning regions will be undertaken in 2012-13 to ensure that aged care services are delivered where they are needed most. Included in the Government's approach to aged care service and program development and planning is an emphasis on Consumer Directed Care approaches in the roll out of the new home care packages and in residential care. The review of the aged care planning regions will involve the examination of the current and projected demographics of each region to ascertain current and future priority for additional aged care places.

The Government is also committed to improving the interface between the aged care and health systems and is providing \$80.2 million over five years to support the planning and delivery of innovative activities such as early supported discharge from hospital and hospital-in the home care. The aim is to improve the planning and provision of services and programs that cater for the additional client care needs of older Australians. One step towards better planning is the establishment of central entry points into the aged care system to ensure that older Australians, their families and carers have access to the right information about services available to them and the linkages between aged care services and other services beyond aged care.

Resolution Number: 77.1

I note that ALGA intends to investigate the development of a policy position on how to address the impact of the ageing population on local government services and communities, including those who live in rural and remote areas. The Government is committed to ensuring continued access to aged care services for frail older people living in rural and remote areas of Australia, at a level of provision that meets the Government's overall aged care benchmarks. People who live in rural and remote areas are identified as people with special needs under the *Aged Care Act 1997*, which means their ageing needs are taken into account in the aged care planning process. This process ensures that aged care places are provided in rural and remote areas, in proportion to the number of older people who live there.

Furthermore, the Government recognises the need for fundamental reform of the aged care system in order to ensure that it continues to provide high quality care and can respond to future challenges, including the ageing population. Information on the comprehensive reform package announced on 20 April 2012 can be found at www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au.

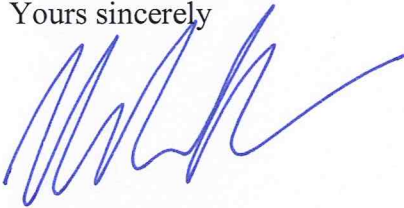
Resolution Number: 80

The Commonwealth Home Support Program is an integral part of the *Living Longer Living Better* aged care reform package. The Commonwealth Home Support Program will be established from 1 July 2015, bringing together under the one program, the Commonwealth HACC Program, the National Respite for Carers Program, Day Therapy Centres program and the Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged program.

In developing the new Commonwealth Home Support Program there will be a review of the way services are currently being delivered in the home to ensure they are being delivered in the best possible way, including meals on wheels, transport and home modification and maintenance.

Thank you for bringing the resolutions of the ALGA to the attention of the Government. I trust that the above information is of use.

Yours sincerely



MARK BUTLER

24 OCT 2012
