AGEING MATTERS

Listening to older Australians and their families

Home Care survey feedback 2025

My parents were happy with their home care provider before moving to a care home last year. Mum appreciated help making the bed and someone to chat to as her world became smaller. Dad got help showering and Mum took art classes. It was all subsidised even though they were well off.

"We were really grateful for the extra help. Joan was such a delight" – Leila M, Sydney

The Home Care Program (HCP) can be seen as a 'qualified' success. Seven in ten users and family members are happy with the service. Australia is a rare country where home support is subsidised. But is it a victim of its own success? Wait lists ballooned as demand grew and funding didn't keep up. Staffing was a challenge. It was difficult to ensure consumers got the same support personnel each time. Staff training could also be an issue. Not everyone could meet Leila's exacting standards.

Changes are coming as HCP becomes Support at Home on July 1. Reforms were canvassed in the *Catalyst* survey … many thanks to those who participated. Little has been done to inform Australians about Support at Home so few are aware of the changes. Home Care users assessed before 12 September 2024 (the vast majority) will be "no worse off" according to government guidelines.

Our survey provided a summary of what was coming. Most positively assessed changes were:

- Only paying for services you use (all daily fees disappear)
- No cost for clinical support services e.g., nursing care, physiotherapy
- Single assessment system for Home Care and Aged Care

Support at Home changes that brought most concern were:

- Pensioners will have to pay more for everyday living support services
- Higher co-payments for everyday living supports e.g., cleaning / gardening
- Confusion: yet more change to home care

Money is always a hot topic. The government is moving to means testing for both Support at Home and Residential Aged Care, eliciting mixed views: *"Why should the wealthy be subsidised?"* vs *"Why should I pay more when I have been careful and saved for my twilight years".* Australians will be asked to pay a co-contribution of between 17.5% - 80% for Everyday supports like cleaning and gardening – a means-tested sliding scale. Likely outcomes of this development will be:

- Australians who are less well off may cut support hours or doing without
- Wealthy Australians are more likely to pay privately for cleaning / gardening etc i.e., bypassing the government's Support at Home program

It will take at least 12 months to see if Support at Home changes are a net-benefit for older Australians. A take-out from this and other Catalyst studies is to do your best to to be proactive with your health to avoid the need for assessment and support. Get fit Australia. Keep your brain active and stay connected with family, friend and the community 😊

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About Ageing Matters

We are an independent insights agency specialising in the care and accomodation needs of older Australians. We undertake three annual surveys – Home Care, Retirement Living and Residential Aged Care, gathering the thoughts and needs of users, family members and those who may look for help in the future… for themselves or a family member.

Thanks again for those who participated in the Home Care study. We gave out 20 shopping vouchers to people across Australia as a thank you for participating in our survey. A list of those lucky recipients can be viewed via this link.

https://www.ageingmatters.org/voucherrecipients

Best wishes
Kevin McCreton
Managing Director