

Home Care Hits a Rough Patch as New System Beds In

- Over 11,000 Australians weigh in on home care—what’s working and what isn’t
- Independence drives demand, but cost and complexity are turning people off
- New “Support at Home” scheme sparks confusion, criticism, and rising prices

A nationwide survey by Ageing Matters and The Catalyst Report reveals a sector in transition—and under strain. More than 11,000 Australians, mostly aged over 60, shared their views on home care, painting a picture of strong demand colliding with growing frustration.

The appeal is clear: people want to stay independent and avoid residential aged care. Many also prefer formal support over relying on family and friends. But barriers loom large. Concerns about losing independence, rising costs, and a lingering reputation problem are keeping some at arm’s length.

Enter the federal government’s new Support at Home scheme, launched in November 2025. Designed to modernise the system, it introduced means-tested co-payments and restructured services. While most existing users were “grandfathered” in under a promise of being “no worse off,” many say reality hasn’t matched the messaging. Reports of higher costs, reduced flexibility, and more complex processes are common.

The rollout hasn’t helped. Providers had little time to prepare, and participants—especially in regional areas—struggle to find services. A new AI-driven assessment tool, dubbed “Robo-care” by critics, has raised eyebrows, particularly when human professionals appear unable to override its decisions.

Public sentiment has dipped. Fewer than one in four rate government-subsidised home care highly, while negative ratings are climbing. Media coverage of long wait times and system bottlenecks hasn’t helped.

And yet, it’s not all bleak. Most users still rate their providers highly, praising staff for their care and accessibility. The frustration, it seems, is aimed squarely at the system—not the people delivering the service.

With political and media pressure building, the question remains: can Support at Home regain trust, or is this just the beginning of a longer adjustment period?