26 November 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

CHSP Alliance calls for ambitious redesign of Australia's primary aged care system

The CHSP Alliance has called on the Australian Government to seize the opportunity to transform the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) into a properly funded, accessible and preventative primary aged care system, rather than simply preserving the existing program.

In a new position statement, *How CHSP Should Be Redesigned*, the Alliance sets out a comprehensive reform agenda following the Government's August decision to retain CHSP as a separate program, with existing funding contracts extended until 1 July 2029. The position statement calls for a formal, funded transition roadmap from 2027 to 2029, culminating in the launch of a revitalised national Primary Aged Care Program.

Professor Kathy Eagar AM, CHSP Alliance Co-Convenor, said, "We urge the Government to be ambitious and to genuinely commit to restructure CHSP as the primary tier underpinning the whole aged care system. The Government cannot afford another aged care failure and certainly won't have its new (but already failing) Support at Home program fixed before the next election. The only quick win available to the Government at this point is to get behind our Alliance reform agenda."

CHSP Alliance Co-Convenor and Chair of Meals on Wheels Australia, Paul Sadler said the Government's decision to retain CHSP was a major victory for older Australians, but the real opportunity was still ahead.

"The Government has made the right decision to preserve CHSP. Now it needs to be ambitious about what CHSP can become. We have an opportunity to build a genuine primary aged care system that helps older people remain independent, supports family carers and prevents unnecessary demand for more expensive aged care, hospitals and residential care."

"Simply maintaining the existing program, with its inadequate funding, lengthy assessments and growing waiting lists, would squander that opportunity," Mr Sadler said.

The Alliance's reform priorities include:

- **A genuine 'no wrong door' approach:** Allow older people to access support through local providers, GPs, hospitals and community organisations without navigating a cumbersome central assessment system.
- **Adequate and sustainable funding:** Replace historical funding allocations with a model reflecting population needs, service demand and the actual costs of maintaining local services.
- **Affordable services:** Retain CHSP's distinct co-payment arrangements rather than imposing Support at Home fees that could discourage early intervention.
- **Better integration:** Establish clear pathways between CHSP, Support at Home, residential aged care and primary health care, while preserving continuity with trusted providers.
- **Stronger support for family carers:** Recognise unpaid carers as essential to the aged care system and improve access to respite and practical assistance.
- **Protecting community-based services:** Preserve the contribution of local not-for-profit organisations, volunteers and community partnerships.

CHSP Alliance
Email: chsp.alliance@gmail.com

The Alliance estimates that CHSP is currently underfunded by $1.4 billion. It has called for an immediate additional $700 million annually through the December 2026 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook, as part of a longer-term increase in annual funding from $3.1 billion to $5.5–6 billion over three years.

Professor Eagar said, "Older people should not have to wait months for an assessment before receiving a meal, transport or basic help at home. Investing in primary aged care is not simply additional expenditure. It is an opportunity to manage demand across the entire aged care system and avoid more costly interventions.

"We also need to recognise that CHSP's community-based providers and volunteers are a national asset. Reform must strengthen that capacity, not bury it under more bureaucracy or inappropriate regulation."

The Alliance is calling for the Government to work directly with older people, providers, carers and communities in co-designing the new program, supported by appropriate legislative amendments and a clear implementation timetable.

"The CHSP Alliance successfully argued that CHSP should have a permanent place in Australia's aged care system. Our next task is to ensure it has the funding, flexibility and policy settings to fulfil its potential. By 2029, Australia should have a primary aged care program that is the foundation of a genuinely integrated aged care system, not simply a rebadged version of today's CHSP," Mr Sadler concluded.

CHSP Alliance

The CHSP Alliance was established by 40 Foundation Member organisations and individuals representing consumers, unions, health professionals, home support providers and researchers and now has around 400 members. More information about the Alliance is available at https://chspalliance.org.au.

Media inquiries:
Paul Sadler
CHSP Alliance Co-Convenor
Chair Meals on Wheels Australia
M: 0418 208 232