

Media Release

DEMENTIA DRIVES AGED CARE CRISIS

- More than a quarter of a million older Australians will be without a care place by 2050 due to severe undersupply
- Significant and extensive reform of the aged care system is needed to address the needs of the ageing population
- Growth in the prevalence of dementia is a major driver in demand for care places
- Both major parties should commit to reform of aged care and a comprehensive plan to address the dementia epidemic in the 2011 Budget

An estimated 279,000 older Australians will be without a residential care place or community care package by 2050, according to a new report from Access Economics, released today by Alzheimer's Australia.

The CEO of Alzheimer's Australia, Glenn Rees, said the report, ***Caring Places***, projects that current Government policy would result in a dramatic undersupply of residential and community aged care places unless the planning of aged care takes into account the increasing numbers of those over 85 years and the growth in the number of people with dementia.

"The projections in the report suggest that if we are to avoid this tragedy, the supply of community packages and residential places over the next 40 years would have to double the average annual increase in places over the last 4 years," Mr Rees said.

A major driver of the increase in demand for care places is the dramatic increase in the number of people estimated to develop dementia, from 257,000 in 2010 to about 1 million by 2050.

Mr Rees called on both major parties to commit to fundamental reform of the aged care system and to a comprehensive response to the dementia epidemic in the 2011 Budget.

"Some elements of reform are being put into place by the Gillard Labor Government including the implementation of a National Aged Care Program, the funding of consumer directed care packages on a limited scale and the commitment to one stop shops for information and assessment," Mr Rees said.

"But this is not enough".

"The undersupply of aged care places and the under-funding of community care will mean greater carer stress and older Australians being forced out of their homes early and into a nursing home. And we know from the consumer survey released by BUPA Care Services today that 80% of Australians do not want to go into an aged care facility unless absolutely necessary."

Lynne Pezzullo, a Director of Access Economics said that the current planning for aged care did not reflect the huge predicted growth in the prevalence of dementia or the increasing numbers of Australians living to the age of 85 and beyond.

“Instead the government bases the number of community aged care packages and residential care places on the number of Australians over the age of 70.

“Decisions are needed in the 2011 Budget to address the undersupply of community packages and residential care places if increased supply is to be in place by 2020 and before the numbers of people with dementia and the over 85s increase significantly.

“One aspect for Government is to provide more choice in funding options for aged care in much the same way as healthcare is provided through Medicare together with the private sector. Another aspect is to revise the current planning of aged care services to increase services in line with the growth of the older population and the prevalence of dementia.

“Based on the growth in the prevalence of dementia, community care packages and residential care places would need to grow by 25% (over 220,000 places) by 2050 as compared to present policy.”

Mr Rees said the report was a reminder of the importance of both major parties to making a commitment to give hope to the 250,000 Australians with dementia and the million Australians who support them.

“The issue has not been addressed in the Health Care Reforms and no additional funding has been provided in the 2010 Federal Budget for the Dementia Initiative – Making Dementia a National Health Priority,” Mr Rees said.

Mr Rees said a comprehensive plan to address the dementia epidemic is urgently needed and should include measures which ensure:

- expanded quality dementia care services;
- timely diagnosis of dementia as part of the reform of primary care;
- action to reduce the dangers of acute care for people with dementia by ensuring staff are aware of a patients cognitive impairment;
- greater funding of psycho-geriatric services so that those people with both acute psychiatric and dementia received appropriate care; and
- increased dementia research funding and dementia risk reduction programs

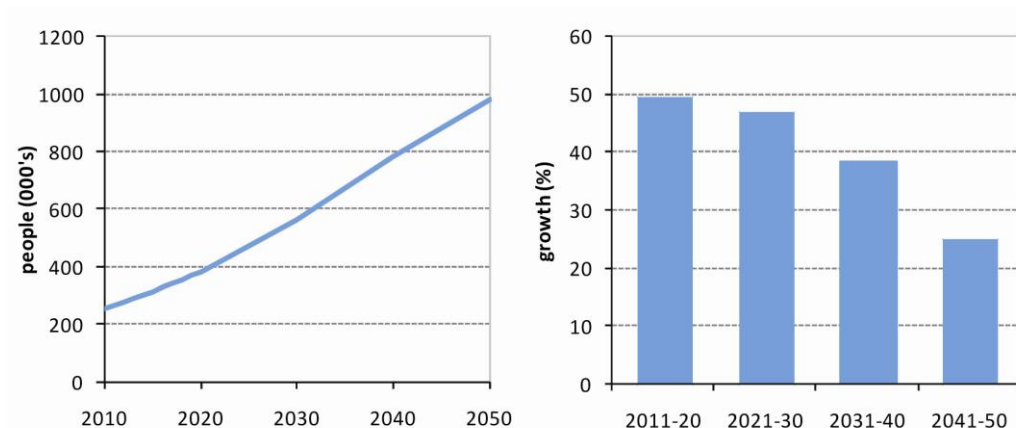
Mr Rees added that in ***Dementia: facing the epidemic***, Alzheimer’s Australia’s 2010-11 Federal Budget submission, had set out detailed proposals but had yet to hear from either major party.

For interviews with Glenn Rees, Lynne Pezzullo or a medical expert, please contact Tegan McGrath on 02 6278 8924 or 0407 232 212.

A copy of the Access Economics Report *Caring Places* is attached. *Dementia: Facing the epidemic* can be accessed at www.alzheimers.org.au

BUPA National Aged Care Consumer Survey can be found at www.bupacare.com.au

Dementia Data

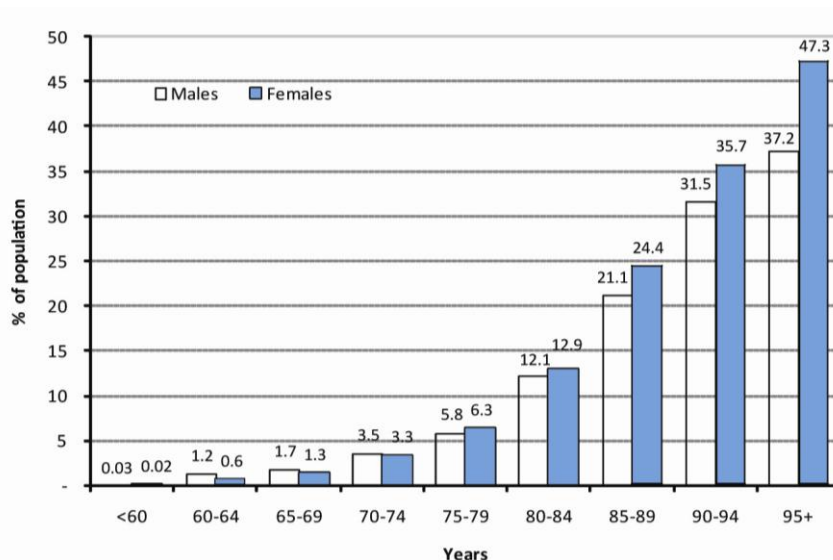


Growth in number of Australians with dementia

Source: Access Economics, *Caring places: planning for aged care and dementia 2010-2050, Volume 1.*

- There are currently around 250,000 people with dementia in Australia.
- By 2050 this will increase to around 1,000,000.
- There are around 1 million family carers of people with dementia.
- It is estimated that there will be more than 75,000 new cases of dementia this year.
- By 2050 this will increase to around 380,000 new cases of dementia this year.
- By 2060 spending on dementia is set to outstrip any other health condition.

Risk of dementia by age



Source: Access Economics, *Caring places: planning for aged care and dementia 2010-2050, Volume 1.*

- Dementia is the third largest underlying cause of death
- Dementia is the leading cause of disability in Australians over 65 years.
- In 2008, about one in eight or 20,000 people died with dementia.
- **By 2020 there will be around 75,000 baby boomers with dementia.**