

Embargoed 10AM AEST 29 August 2013

Media Release

Need for resources for the disadvantaged in aged care reforms

Alzheimer's Australia CEO Glenn Rees today warned that disadvantaged groups are likely to miss out on aged care services if their special needs are not given a greater focus in the *Living Longer. Living Better.* aged care reforms.

Speaking at the Navigating Complexities of Consumer Directed Care Conference, Mr Rees said the aged care reforms required resources for specific strategies to reach out to people with dementia, the homeless, Indigenous people, and to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and LGBTI communities.

"These people are likely to face unique challenges in accessing aged care services because of lack of trust in mainstream services, social isolation, complex care needs and the experience for many of stigma and discrimination," Mr Rees said.

"There are many things to celebrate in the aged care reforms but the consumer directed guidelines for home care packages, as they currently stand, are disappointing.

"The guidelines do not recognise the need for resources to build a service provider system designed to enable decision making by those who for whatever reason feel alienated from mainstream services."

Mr Rees suggested that the strategies needed to better support these groups included:

- Resourcing of supportive networks to provide outreach to individuals and communities, building on what is already there to the maximum extent possible
- Further developing the Gateway model so that it better works with those in a position to support diverse groups
- Expanded education and training for care workers
- Flexible service funding with the financial incentives necessary to respond to vulnerable groups, such as with the dementia and homeless supplements model
- Research and evaluation to better understand how consumer directed care works in respect of disadvantaged groups and how the decision making process can be made more sensitive to their needs.

"These groups face a real risk of being further marginalised in the implementation of the aged care reforms unless their unique needs are addressed and resources made available to build their capability to access the aged care services they need," Mr Rees said.

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Mr Rees' speech will be available at <http://www.fightdementia.org.au/research-publications/speeches.aspx>.

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National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500

An interpreter service is available

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

Dementia is a National health priority Area

www.fightdementia.org.au

Media enquiries: Krystal Craig / 0407 019 430 / krystal.craig@alzheimers.org.au