
Growth in dementia needs cannot be ignored

UnitingCare Australia today expressed concern about the abolition of the Dementia and Severe Behaviour Supplement.

“The Dementia and Severe Behaviour Supplement was introduced to meet the additional costs of caring for people with severe needs. While that cost has proved to be much larger than expected, that is reflective of the significant level of need we are facing. It is vital that we find ways to meet the needs of some of our frailest Australians,” said UnitingCare National Director Lin Hatfield Dodds.

More than 300,000 Australians live with dementia and the numbers are expected to triple by 2050. The Supplement was introduced in August 2013 after aged care providers had for years highlighted gaps in services for people with severe dementia.

“Service providers have acted in good faith and have used the supplement to put in place care plans and staff to provide badly needed services. The funding for these additional supports is going to be stripped away in just a few weeks’ time, creating enormous challenges,” Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

“It is vital that people experiencing severe symptoms of dementia are not ignored. The Government, care providers and the community need to work together to ensure that they are guaranteed sufficient support. UnitingCare Australia is committed to that partnership.

“We look forward to working with the Government to ensure that a gap does not grow again in servicing the needs of people with dementia.”

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UnitingCare Australia, an agency of the Uniting Church, represents one of the largest networks of social service providers in Australia, with a network that employs around 39,000 staff, supported by 28,500 volunteers, operating nationally across 1,600 sites in remote, regional, rural and urban Australia.