**Community care at risk of service system failure**

Most people want to remain living in their own home until the end of their life. Aged care funding provided by the Commonwealth Government to people aged over 65 years is intended to assist with community-based support and care services.

However, national reforms have caused concerns about potential community care service system failures. The reforms continue to have significant impacts on clients, carers, communities, workforces and councils across Victoria.

The Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) provides home-based aged care services to support continued independence of people aged over 65 years to remain at home. Funding for the CHSP is currently committed only until 30 June 2022.

The longer-term future of the CHSP is uncertain. This is having a significant impact on councils’ budget planning processes, and is influencing council decisions to consider changes in their model of service delivery. Continuity of care and service availability for frail older Australians are now at risk. The CHSP should be continued permanently and expanded, with recurrent block funding.

**Service stability needed**

National aged care reforms have placed significant stress on Victorian councils, particularly the 72 municipalities delivering the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

As a service planner and provider of community care, as well as a current funding contributor, local government seeks a commitment to five critical actions to help achieve service stability:

1. **National Partnership Agreement:** Establish a National Partnership on community aged care and continue the bilateral agreementwith Victoria to quarantine the strengths of the Victorian Community Care system to achieve continuity of care, and access and equity for older people.
2. **Public sector stewardship:** Ensure public sector stewardship is continued for community care, including negotiating a formal role with local government in planning, co-design and stewardship on behalf of clients and communities.
3. **Funding beyond 2022:** Commit to retain ongoing block funding to support population-based service planning and delivery of the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), provide funding certainty to councils post June 2022 and reinstate CHSP annual growth funding. Discontinue Level 1 Home Care Packages and roll the funding allocation into CHSP.
4. **Regional Assessment Service:** Continue to fund the Victorian Government to deliver the Regional Assessment Service post June 2020.
5. **Service coordination:** Establish a new funding stream for planning and service coordinationto ensure clients (and their carers) can continue to access the service system; and support councils’ role in local area planning in collaboration with State and Commonwealth governments to ensure services are available to respond to diverse needs.