FACT SHEET

Living Longer Living Better – Tackling Dementia

Key Points:
Dementia is a significant chronic disease and is the third leading cause of death in Australia, after heart disease and stroke. One in four people over the age of 85 have dementia and the number of people living with dementia is expected to grow from 269,000 people today, to almost 1 million by 2050.

Through the Living Longer Living Better aged care reform package, the Government will provide $268.4 million over five years to tackle dementia, from when people first approach their GP with the early signs of dementia through to when they need a very high level of aged care.

As a means of focusing attention and effort on dementia, the Australian Government will recommend to state and territory Health Ministers that dementia be recognised as the ninth National Health Priority Area. This will help drive collaborative efforts aimed at tackling dementia at national, local and state and territory levels.

For many people, it can take more than three years from the time they first notice symptoms to when they receive a diagnosis of dementia. Better support and training for health professionals to assist them in caring for individuals with behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia can enable individuals with dementia to be cared for at home for a longer period of time.

The Government will provide $41.3 million over five years to:
- support GPs to make a more timely diagnosis of dementia allowing opportunities for earlier medical and social interventions; and
- expand the scope of Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Services to include support for people with dementia in primary care and hospitals.

Up to 50 per cent of all patients in hospital have cognitive impairment. Many of these people may not be identified as having dementia and therefore do not receive appropriate care. The Government is providing $39.2 million to improve hospital services for people with dementia. People with dementia will be better identified, and better coordination and support systems will be developed and trialled to enable safe and appropriate hospital services.

In 2012, there are approximately 16,000 people who have younger onset dementia. The Government will provide $23.6 million to enable younger people with dementia to access better coordinated care and support, assisted
by dementia key workers. This funding will also help younger people with
dementia continue to actively participate through the development and
dissemination of information for employers about dementia.

Around 52 per cent of all aged care recipients have some form of dementia. The Government is providing $123.3 million for a new Dementia Supplement for eligible Home Care package recipients that will increase funding by 10 per cent to recognise the higher costs of caring for people with dementia.

Individuals with severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia often find difficulty in getting access to appropriate services. The Government is providing $41.0 million to improve the quality of care in aged care homes for residents who have severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. This funding will be delivered by adding a new Very High Level of funding to the Behaviour Domain of the Aged Care Funding Instrument. ¹

**Implementation arrangements:**
Grants to support better primary care and hospital services, to expand Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Services and to support younger people with dementia will be made available from 2012-13.

The additional funding for people with dementia in Home Care packages and residential care will commence on 1 July 2013.

**Improving the life of people with dementia**
The Government is delivering on its commitment to make aged care reform a second term priority, with a reform package that provides $3.7 billion over the next five years. These reforms include $268.4 million over five years to better support people with dementia.

This funding is on top of current initiatives, which include:
- A projected $150 million over five years for service improvement, including information provision, counselling, service referral, and training.
- A projected $180 million over five years for dementia research through the National Health and Medical Research Council.

As part of the conversations on ageing held across Australia, the need for additional support for people with dementia was one of the most commonly raised issues. This included support for people seeking a diagnosis of dementia, support for people with dementia in hospitals, and funding to recognise the costs of caring for people with dementia in aged care.

**Further Information**
For more information please visit: [www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au)

May 2012

¹ Some of the funding for the new Dementia Supplement in Home Care packages and for the new Very High level of funding in the Behaviour Domain of the Aged Care Funding Instrument comes from redirecting funding currently paid through the mainstream aged care funding arrangements.