



ANGLICARE
AUSTRALIA



LivingCare



Aged Care Plus

UnitingCare
Australia

15 March 2010

The Hon Kevin Rudd MP
Prime Minister
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

We write to support the overall direction of your proposals for a national health and hospitals network and to urge that you make aged care reform an integral part of the first steps in implementing health reforms.

As you are aware, the pressure Australia's ageing population will place on the health system has been identified in numerous reports, including most recently in IGR 2010 and the final report of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission.

In order to respond to this pressure, new ways need to be found to make the provision of health and aged care services for older people more effective and sustainable. This includes ensuring, where appropriate, that older people are cared for by less expensive community-based services, including in their own homes for as long as possible with the support of services that sustain and restore health and activity, foster independence, and in aged care homes when that is appropriate. Ready access to such services would help reduce

emergency department presentations and unnecessary hospital admissions, as well as the number of older people inappropriately occupying expensive acute care beds.

Viewed in this light, aged care reform could become a tangible response to, and illustration of the benefits of, the allocative efficiency principles which underpin the proposed health reforms.

To give effect to these efficiencies, and at the same time make the availability of aged care services more responsive to the needs and preferences of individual consumers and their families, we strongly support reforms which would:

- make aged care services an entitlement based on assessed need, rather than the current policy settings which ration the volume and types of services;
- give older people and their families greater choice of types of services, who provides them, and where and when they are received;
- strengthen safety nets and incentives to ensure that special needs groups have access to optimal care and support; and
- allow those who can afford it to contribute to the cost of their care and accommodation and allow greater flexibility in how they make their contribution.

We have been encouraged by the Australian Government's response to the Productivity Commission's recent Review of Regulatory Burdens. In particular we welcome the advice that the foreshadowed Productivity Commission public inquiry into aged care would provide specific recommendations on how to implement the Productivity Commission's recommendations for improving the quality and diversity of aged care services, including options for relaxing supply constraints and improving consumer responsiveness. We note that these reform directions were also embraced by the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission.

We also support the recommendation made by the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission to consolidate responsibility for all aged care programs with the Commonwealth. This is a necessary precondition for effective reform.

We are mindful that while these reforms involve a significant change to current arrangements and present some risk in their implementation, they are necessary if we are to effectively and sustainably care for and support the current and future generations of older Australians.

As a group, we will be advocating widely for these reforms. We would encourage you to pursue these reforms and assure you of our resolve to support their phased implementation.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your Office to expand on this letter and to assure you of our support and cooperation.

Yours sincerely



Kasy Chambers,
Executive Director
Anglicare Australia



Martin Laverty
Chief Executive Officer
Catholic Health Australia



Jacqueline Kelly,
Chief Executive Officer
Lutheran Aged Care Australia



Paul Sadler
Chief Executive Officer
Presbyterian Aged Care NSW & ACT
On behalf of National Presbyterian Aged
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Robert Orie,
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Sir Moses Montefiore Jewish Home



Sharon Callister
Chief Executive Officer
The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus



Rod Young
Chief Executive Officer
Aged Care Association Australia

cc. The Hon Wayne Swan MP Treasurer
The Hon Nicola Roxon MP Minister for Health and Ageing
The Hon Justine Elliot MP Minister for Ageing
The Hon Paul Lynch MP Minister for Ageing NSW
The Hon Carmel Tebbutt MP Minister for Health NSW
The Hon Eric Roozendaal MP Treasurer of NSW
The Hon Daniel Andrews MP Minister for Health VIC
The Hon Lisa Neville MP Minister for Senior Victorians VIC
The Hon John Lenders MP Treasurer of VIC
The Hon John Hill MP Minister for Health SA
The Hon Jennifer Rankine MP Minister for Ageing SA
The Hon Kevin Owen Foley MP Treasurer of SA
The Hon Dr Kim Hames MP Minister for Health WA
The Hon Troy Buswell MP Treasurer of WA
The Hon Paul Lucas MP Minister for Health QLD
The Hon Mr Andrew Fraser MP Treasurer of QLD
The Hon Lara Giddings MP Minister for Health TAS
The Hon Michael Aird MP Treasurer of Tasmania
The Hon John Stanhope MP Chief Minister of ACT
The Hon Katy Gallagher MP Treasurer and Minister for Health ACT
The Hon Paul Raymond Henderson MP Chief Minister of NT
The Hon Delia phoebe Lawrie MP Treasurer of NT
The Hon Konstantine Vatskalis MP Minister for Health NT