

16 December 2016

Mr James Christian
Group Manager, Disability, Employment & Carers
Department of Social Services
GPO Box 9820
Canberra ACT 2601

Re: A draft Service Delivery Model for a proposed new carer support service system

Dear Mr Christian,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a brief submission to the consultation regarding 'A draft Service Delivery Model for a proposed new carer support service system'.

We note the work of this consultation has stemmed from a co-design process with the CarerGateway Advisory Group which includes a COTA Australia staff member. We also note our endorsement of the substantive submission made by Carers Australia to this inquiry. On this basis our written comments here will be brief.

In addition to our endorsement of the Carers Australia submission, COTA Australia would like to provide the following comments:

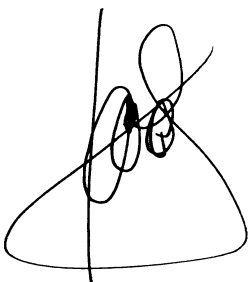
- Broadly COTA Australia supports the general direction of the model; however we note that the success of the new service system will depend, in part, on the quantum of investment provided by the Government to ensure an appropriate level of local services and sufficient investment into service coordination via the Regional Hubs.
- We applaud the Government's effort to merge the disparate services for carers across the various service systems of disability, mental health and aged care. While we support this principle, we would seek assurances that in doing so older Australians currently able to access services will not be disadvantaged under the new Service Delivery Model. We will be closely monitoring this through our local networks.
- We welcome the indication that Regional Hubs will be responsible for tighter integration with other sectors such as My Aged Care. It will be important that the My Aged Care website and the Carers Gateway website have cross links and mutual promotion of each other's services.
- We note that under the proposed model many carers of older Australians will continue to need to access respite from the aged care system, based on the assessed needs of the care recipient, while accessing services for themselves based on their own assessed need via the new carer support service system. While we accept the practical reality of why respite remains in the aged care system, COTA recommends a review of this arrangement occur as part of the

integration of the Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home Care Packages Program from 2018. If respite is meant to be a service for the carer then it should be based on the assessed needs of the carer, rather than of the care recipient. This is particularly important when considering a single carer with more than one care recipient receiving care from across multiple/different service systems. The proposed Service Delivery Model does not seem to provide a facilitation service to ensure carers can access respite at the same time for their multiple care recipients who may be eligible for services from across different service systems.

- COTA Australia notes that the paper discusses 'sector development' but does not specifically discuss the need for a sustainable peak body of carers themselves within the model. It is critical that a strong peak body representing the interests of carers is a core component of any move towards a more contestable market driven service system.
- In relation to the National Education and Training Initiative, we were dismayed to find that there was no inclusion of 'Peer Education' under this initiative. While we acknowledge the model recognises the valuable contribution carers can make in supporting other carers going through the carers journey, COTA similarly believes that for some skills the best educators are those with a lived experience of the caring process.
- COTA notes the move to expand some information and services to an online medium and welcomes the flexibility this may deliver for carers who can often be time poor or unable to access supports during standard business hours. Nevertheless, not all older carers will have the skills to access such services. COTA strongly encourages the evaluation of the program be designed to ensure monitoring of outcomes for all age and types of carers, as well as a comparison between the modes of delivery of similar services to ensure no carer is disadvantaged by the new modelling.

COTA Australia looks forward to continuing the strong and productive relationship as part of the carers integrated support services process. Should you have any questions regarding this submission, please contact Corey Irlam, Aged Care Reform Policy Manager via email cirlam@cota.org.au or via telephone on 03 9909 7909.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Yates', written over a large, loopy scribble.

Ian Yates AM
Chief Executive