

Welcome to the sixth edition of Your Provider Voice – January 2018



Hello,

Welcome to 2018.

It's been almost one year now since moving into Client Portability and I believe things have started to settle down as we all work out our roles in this new environment. You will see in the newsletter some more facts and figures about the environment of Home Care Packages as released by the Department of Health in December 2017. There is a small but steady growth of home care approvals with a large shift of approvals to Level 3 and Level 4 packages. However, the queue for home care packages is still very large with over 100,000 consumers on waiting lists.

I am pleased to say that Care Connect continues to grow steadily with clients choosing our services and a big thanks to providers who have referred clients to us. What a great opportunity to work together!

We have much planned in 2018, starting with our provider forums in March in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane; be sure to register when you receive the invitation. We have lined up a recorded interview from the Hon. Ken Wyatt, Minister for Aged Care discussing the government's policy and key insights. We also have a guest speaker, Dr. Sally Cockburn (Dr. Feelgood), who will share her passion and insights as a clinician around aged care.

My very best wishes to you all for a safe and successful 2018.

Sincerely,

Paul Ostrowski
CEO

Don't miss the 2018 Provider Forum



After such a good response in 2017, we are running the provider forums again in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Our theme is "Collaboration for Consumers"

City	Date	Venue	Time
Melbourne	Tuesday, March 6, 2018	Rydges on Swanston	7:00am (registrations) – 9:00am Breakfast included
Sydney	Thursday, March 8, 2018	Rydges Parramatta	7:00am (registrations) – 9:00am Breakfast included
Brisbane	Friday, March 9, 2018	The Treasury	7:00am (registrations) – 9:00am Breakfast included

Speakers will include:

- The Care Connect **Executive Management Group** on how the policy changes have affected Care Connect and the benefits of industry collaboration. **Paul Ostrowski (CEO), Sally Johnstone (General Manager, Marketing and Business Development) and Andrew Sherri (CFO)** will be attending, as well as Eileen Keane (Commercial Manager – Procurement) and local leaders from each state.

- A recorded interview from the **Hon. Ken Wyatt, Minister for Aged Care** discussing government policy and key insights.



Ken Wyatt was elected in 2010 as the Federal Member for Hasluck, located East of Perth, making history as the first Indigenous Member of the House of Representatives. In January 2016, Ken again made history as the first Indigenous Minister to serve in Federal Government, after being appointed as the Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health. In addition to Ken's extensive career in health and education, he has made an enormous contribution to the wider community in training and mentoring young people. This was recognised in 1996 when Ken was awarded the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours' list. In 2000, Ken was awarded a Centenary of Federation Medal for 'his efforts and contribution to improving the quality of life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and mainstream Australian society in education and health.' Ken brings his knowledge in the areas of health and education to his role as Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health, as well as a lifetime of personal experiences in his family life and as an active member of the local Hasluck community.



Dr. Sally Cockburn (Dr. Feelgood) will share her passion and insights as a clinician around aged care.

Dr Sally Cockburn is a GP and health advocate - with a twist - while she practices part time in suburban Melbourne she is also known around Australia as 'Dr Feelgood', a high profile media presenter who champions sensitive issues and demystifies medicine.

Along with over 30 years of clinical experience, her 22 year media career spans every television network and Australia's top radio networks. She spent 10 years as health presenter on Good Morning Australia with Bert Newton and her national radio sex and relationships program Pillowtalk was a trailblazing phenomenon in the 1990s. She also hosted her own talk back TV show on Channel 7. Currently she can be heard hosting her Sunday Night talk back radio program, Talking Health, on Melbourne's radio 3AW.

Behind the scenes, Sally is passionate about patient and community issues and is active in health policy and education at many levels. Sally is a Lifetime Australia Day Ambassador for Victoria and in 2010 Sally was inducted into the Victorian Women's Honour roll for harnessing the media to improve health communications. That same year she was also awarded the Monash Distinguished Alumni service award.

She has served as Chair of Family Planning Victoria, on the boards of Metropolitan Ambulance Service and Vic Health and also the Victorian Government's Mental Health Reform Council and Sexual Health Task Force.

Sally is an ambassador for many community organisations including Royal District Nursing service, Melbourne Osteoporosis Support Group and Lort Smith Animal Hospital.

A formal invitation will be sent out in early 2018. Watch out for this in your emails. We require you to register for the event.

Listening to your feedback – Remittance Advice and RCTI

In November 2017, our Procurement Manager, Eileen Keane and our CFO, Andrew Sherri, visited a number of providers in New South Wales and Queensland. It was a great opportunity to meet many of our providers and make face-to-face introductions.

We also received feedback from you on improvements we can make to assist you doing business with Care Connect. We are currently working on some system changes on the Remittance Advice and the RCTI - suggestions that have come directly from you. In particular, we are now testing a change to the Remittance Advice to add your 'vendor reference' and a subtotal to the documents. For the RCTI, we are adding a subtotal by your 'vendor reference'. We will also test the changes with a number of providers to ensure we deliver what's required. Our plan is to have this implemented by the end of January. Thank you for your feedback.

Referrals for Care Connect to manage Home Care Packages

Care Connect supports clients at all stages of their Home Care Package journey - from making an application to My Aged Care for a package (at no cost to the client), through to free consultation in their home if they have received a Home Care Package or are wanting to change their service provider. You may know of potential clients that need assistance to help them stay living in their home, and we can work together in providing it.

The easiest way for you to make a referral directly is via our website at:

Website: <https://www.careconnect.org.au/contact-us/make-a-referral/>
Phone: 1800MYCHOICE (1800 692 464 Free call)
Email: referralenquiries@careconnect.org.au

Our Referrals Team will respond to you directly and keep you updated on the outcome of your referrals and how we can work together to provide the support the client's needs. Where the client agrees, we will always give you first choice on providing the service.

Please do not hesitate to contact Emily McDougall, Marketing Manager Aged Care (emcdougall@careconnect.org.au) at any time to answer any questions you may have around potential referrals so we can continue to support each other, and more importantly, individuals stay living independently and happily at home for life.

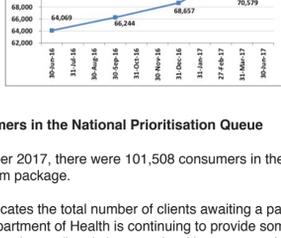
Home Care Packages Facts & Insights

In the last newsletter, we shared some facts and figures from the Government's *Home Care Packages Program, Data Report 27 February – 30 June 2017*^[1].

In December, 2017, the Department of Health released the second Home Care Packages data report, *Home Care Packages Program, Data Report 1 July – 30 September 2017*^[2]. This latest report continues to build the picture of the Home Care Package landscape in Australia and the national prioritisation process. Read on for further facts and figures from this report.

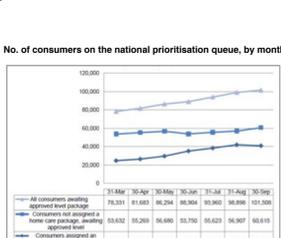
Approved providers

As at 30 September 2017, there were 766 approved home care providers of home care services, an increase of 4.2% since 30 June 2017. There has been steady growth in the number of approved home care providers as can be seen in the chart below, with the biggest increase at 27 February, 2017 (introduction of portability):



Home Care Package approvals

- There were 31,698 approvals for home care between 1 July and 30 September 2017, bringing total approvals since the commencement of portability to 69,716.

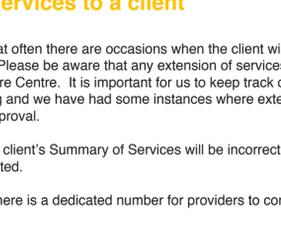


- There has been a large shift to HCP approvals for Level 3 and Level 4 packages compared to the last report which showed Level 2 packages were the most frequent. In this report, the most frequent home care approval was for Level 4 (39% or 12,405).

- For the Level 3 and Level 4 packages released, 37% were considered high priority with 51% of Level 4 packages high priority. As also observed by Care Connect, there is a high need for Level 3 and Level 4 packages by clients.

Number of Home Care Packages Released

- Between March and September there was a 23.9% increase in the average number of approvals each day, from 401 to 497. This is well above historical population growth in the over 70s category, which has averaged 3% annually over the past five years. This is seen in the chart below, showing a slight trend upwards:



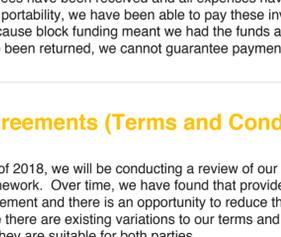
- As at 30 June 2017, there were 71,423 consumers in a home care package, an increase of 1.2% since 31 March 2017.

- 32,722 home care packages were assigned to consumers between 1 July and 30 September 2017, taking the total number of packages released since the commencement of portability to 80,451.

- An additional 6,000 higher level home care packages were made available in mid-September to help address demand for level 3 and 4 package levels.

- There were approximately 6,900 new entries to home care between 1 April and 30 June 2017, and approximately 6,100 exits.

- The trend is shown in the graph below:



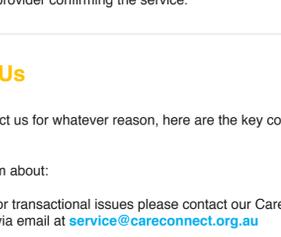
Number of Consumers in the National Prioritisation Queue

- As at 30 September 2017, there were 101,508 consumers in the queue, with 40.2% assigned an interim package.

- The first chart indicates the total number of clients awaiting a package continues to increase. The Department of Health is continuing to provide some relief by assigning some lower level packages (interim) to people with more complex needs.

- The second chart indicates that the current breakdown of the 101,508 consumers waiting for a package is skewed to Level 4 needs.

- This is reflective of Care Connect's experience where together with client growth, we have seen a significant amount of package upgrades with consumers moving from Level 2 to Level 4.



Extending services to a client

We have noticed that often there are occasions when the client wishes to extend the services provided. Please be aware that any extension of services for a client must be approved by our Care Centre. It is important for us to keep track of clients' budgets against their funding and we have had some instances where extended services have occurred without approval.

It will also mean the client's Summary of Services will be incorrect as their calendar will not have been updated.

Did you know that there is a dedicated number for providers to contact the Care Centre? It is **1300 966 170**

Late Provider Invoices

Some providers are still invoicing us very late and often after the client has left our services. Invoicing is the mechanism that confirms the service has occurred. Confirmation of the service to a client can be either by validation on the portal (for those providers where the portal has been rolled out) or by email (for those providers who are not yet on the portal).

Over recent months we have worked hard to improve our Accounts Payable processes including the deployment of the provider portal to ensure you can be paid quickly. Given the change in funding under Consumer Directed Care (CDC), it is extremely important that all services are confirmed **within 30 days** of the service being completed. We are happy to work with you to see what improvements can be made to ensure you can provide your invoices/portal confirmation to us on time.

Under CDC, a consumer can discharge at any time and their excess funds need to be returned to government (or transferred to a new provider). Government guidelines require that providers forward their former client a written notice about their unspent home care amount **56 days** after the cessation day. This ensures a final reconciliation can occur, that the home care fees have been received and all expenses have been identified and processed. Prior to portability, we have been able to pay these invoices, even if a client had discharged, because block funding meant we had the funds available. If invoicing is after our funds have been returned, we cannot guarantee payment for your services.

Provider Agreements (Terms and Conditions)

During the first half of 2018, we will be conducting a review of our Terms and Conditions and agreement framework. Over time, we have found that providers may be on different versions of the agreement and there is an opportunity to reduce that variation and align to one version. Where there are existing variations to our terms and conditions, they will continue, provided they are suitable for both parties.

This project will also seek to align standard and non-standard hours across our provider network whenever possible. An example of this would be where one provider has standard hours between 8am – 6pm; yet another provider will have standard hours between 7am – 5pm. We will work with you to establish a new way to represent your rates.

Provider Portal update

We have had a great response to our new supplier portal with over 80% of our providers signing up to it and processing their invoices through it.

For those of you who might need a refresher, a user guide is available as well as four simple videos showing the features of the portal. Both can be found at: [Service Provider portal user guide](#)

The portal has significantly sped up the payments cycle. In the past, providers would normally have had to wait 6-8 weeks to get paid. The waiting time has now been reduced to 2-3 weeks. In fact, the longest delay now is the time taken between the service being completed and the provider confirming the service.

Contacting Us

If you need to contact us for whatever reason, here are the key contact details to remember:

To talk with our team about:

- missing services or transactional issues please contact our Care Centre on **1300 966 170** or via email at service@careconnect.org.au

- pricing and service agreement discrepancies please contact Procurement on **(03) 9270 9993** or via email at procurement@careconnect.org.au

[1] https://gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Resources/Reports-and-publications/2017/September/Home_Care_Packages_Program_Data_Report_2017

[2] https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/Resources/Reports-and-publications/2017/December/Home_Care_Packages_Program_Data_Report_1_July_30_September_2017