Communique’ Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA)

As the peak national organisation for allied health professions, AHPA has an important strategic leadership role and is the body that the Federal Government and other national organisations turn to when they seek a collective view of allied health.

The Commonwealth Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme has been developed to respond to the Council of Australian Governments’ commitment to continue to support people aged 65 and over (and Indigenous people aged 50 and over) who are currently in receipt of state-managed specialist disability services but are ineligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) at the time of NDIS implementation in a region.

CoS is a national program and eligibility is consistent across all states and territories. The CoS Programme supports people with disability who meet all of the following criteria:

• are 65 years and over or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, at the time the NDIS begins rolling out in their region;

• are assessed as being ineligible for the NDIS at the time the NDIS begins rolling out in their region; and

• are an existing client of state-administered specialist disability services at the time the CoS Programme rolls out in their region.

The CoS Programme will ensure that older people with disability continue to be supported to **achieve similar outcomes to those they were achieving prior to the transition**. The CoS Programme funds equivalent care and services, so when clients transition to the CoS Programme their services shouldn’t change. In-scope clients will continue to receive their current services from their existing provider.

**Information on the CoS Programme may be found on the Department of Health website at** [**www.health.gov.au**](http://www.health.gov.au) **by searching ‘Continuity of Support’.**

Webpages provide more information for both CoS service providers and CoS clients.

<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/programs-services/commonwealth-continuity-of-support-programme>

<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/programs/commonwealth-continuity-of-support-programme/provider-resources>

Resources are available to help gain a better understanding of the CoS Programme.

These include:

[CoS Client Handbook](https://agedcare.health.gov.au/programs/commonwealth-continuity-of-support-programme/client-resources/cos-client-handbook);

[CoS Client Handbook Easy Read Version](https://agedcare.health.gov.au/programs/commonwealth-continuity-of-support-programme/client-resources/cos-client-information-easy-read-version);

[Commonwealth CoS Programme Manual](https://agedcare.health.gov.au/programs/commonwealth-continuity-of-support-programme/commonwealth-cos-programme-manual).

For information and support for disability service organisations visit the [National Disability Services](http://www.nds.org.au/) website.

**Current status of transition to the CoS Programme**

With the exception of Western Australia, all states and territories will have transitioned by 30 June 2019.  WA is due to transition by 30 June 2020.

New South Wales, South Australia and ACT have transitioned.  Tasmania, Queensland and Northern Territory will transition by 30 June 2019, following by Western Australia by 30 June 2020.

**To access the NDIS, the following requirements need to be met:**

* have a permanent and significant disability that affects your ability to take part in everyday activities;
* be aged less than 65 when you first access the scheme;
* be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or a New Zealand citizen who holds a Protected Special Category Visa; and
* live in an area where the NDIS is available.

**Funding for the following programs will gradually transition into the NDIS as it rolls out around Australia. This information is sourced from the**

<https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/programs-services/for-people-with-disability/national-disability-insurance-scheme/transition-of-commonwealth-programs-to-the-national-disability-insurance-scheme-ndis>

* [Disability Employment Assistance](https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-programmes-services-for-people-with-disability/australian-disability-enterprises)
* [Work Based Personal Assistance](https://www.dss.gov.au/node/47241)
* [Helping Children with Autism](https://www.dss.gov.au/node/33645)
* [Better Start for Children with Disability](https://www.dss.gov.au/node/33645)
* [Mental Health Respite: Carer Support](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/mental-health/programs-services#6)
* [Mobility Allowance](https://www.dss.gov.au/about-the-department/benefits-payments/working-age-payments)
* [National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service](https://www.dss.gov.au/node/1815)
* [Outside School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-people-with-disability/outside-school-hours-care-for-teenagers-with-disability)
* [Personal Helpers and Mentors](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/mental-health/programs-services#4)
* [Respite Support for Carers of Young People with Severe or Profound Disability](https://www.dss.gov.au/node/3002)
* [Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children](https://www.dss.gov.au/node/46081)
* [Young Carers Respite and Information Service](https://www.dss.gov.au/node/2956)
* [Younger Onset Dementia Key Worker Program](https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/programmes-services/for-people-with-disability/younger-onset-dementia-key-worker-program)

For people NOT eligible for the CoS Programme and are aged 65 and over, a link is available to [enter aged care](https://agedcare.health.gov.au/programs/commonwealth-continuity-of-support-programme/entering-aged-care).

If not eligible for NDIS or CoS people can access the aged care and health system

My Aged Care is the Australian Government’s single entry point for aged care services. My Aged Care can be accessed at [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au) or by telephone on 1800 200 422 between 8am and 8pm on weekdays and between 10am and 2pm on Saturdays (AEST). The programs available through My Aged Care cover an end-to-end spectrum of care types, and include:

Ongoing residential aged care for people unable to continue living in their own home.

Subsidised consumer directed home care through the Home Care Packages Program.

Entry level home care to help older people live independently and in their homes and communities through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).

**Interface issue**

The CoS Programme responds to a Council of Australian Governments’ commitment to ensure ongoing support for a closed cohort of approximately 8,500 older people aged over 65 (or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people) who receive state administered specialist disability services at the time of NDIS implementation in their region, but are ineligible for the NDIS due to their age.

The decision to cap NDIS eligibility to people under 65 was a decision of Government and reflected recommendations made by the Productivity Commission.

For older people who acquire a disability after the age of 65, there are several aged care programs that can be accessed through My Aged Care. Programs available through My Aged Care cover an end-to-end spectrum of care types. These include support available through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme and the Home Care Packages Program to help older people to remain living independently in their own homes. There is also Residential Care available for people unable to continue living in their own home.

The Australian Government continues to invest in more aged care services. Since Budget 2018-19, the Government has announced $2.2 billion in funding for an additional 34,000 packages.

The additional packages have started rolling out, and will reduce wait times for home care and ensure more people can receive support and services in their own home and live independently for as long as possible. By 2021-22, more than 74,000 high level home care packages will be available, which is an increase of 86 per cent on 2017-18.