

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 30 January 2026

Hospital funding certainty welcome - but aged care delays will keep clogging Tasmanian hospitals

COTA Tasmania welcomes the announcement of the outcomes of the National Health Reform Agreement, including additional funding for Tasmania's public hospitals and greater long-term certainty.

However, COTA Tasmania warns that hospital funding certainty alone won't fix hospital bottlenecks if older people can't access timely aged care. Recent national Productivity Commission aged care data shows the median time between approval for a home-care package and receiving services increased from 118 days in 2023-24 to 245 days in 2024-25.

COTA Tasmania CEO Brigid Wilkinson said older Tasmanians should not be left to deteriorate while waiting months for the support they have been assessed as needing.

"This hospital funding deal is an important step for Tasmania, and we welcome the additional investment and certainty it provides," Ms Wilkinson said.

"But if aged care isn't accessible in time, older people can end up stuck in hospital beds when they should be supported safely at home or in appropriate care."

"When people can't get home care in time, their health declines, families are pushed to breaking point, and people end up in hospital or residential care earlier than they should," Ms Wilkinson said. "No one should ever have to wait more than 30 days for the care they need."

"Older Tasmanians don't care which level of government is responsible - they care about getting help when they need it," Ms Wilkinson said. "Now that hospital funding certainty has been secured, the next test is delivering timely aged care so hospitals can function the way they're meant to."

What COTA Tasmania is calling for

COTA Tasmania is calling on the Australian Government and all jurisdictions to treat aged care access as a core part of relieving hospital pressure, including:

1. Urgently increase the supply of home-care packages and ensure services actually commence quickly.
2. Adopt a clear timeliness target - no older person should wait more than 30 days for assessed care.
3. Strengthen quality and compliance in home and community care so increased funding translates into real care.
4. Improve transparency on delayed discharges and the reasons people remain in hospital after they are medically ready to leave.

ENDS

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