
The Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) Alliance provides a national conduit for collaboration between PICAC organisations in every state and territory. Funded by the Commonwealth Government since 1997, PICAC organisations support aged care providers to deliver culturally appropriate care and strengthen cultural responsiveness through collaboration, training, and advocacy.

MEDIA RELEASE

1/5/26

Budget should deliver continuation of the Commonwealth Home Support Program - no extra cost to taxpayers and great benefits for older people

The Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) Alliance has called for the 2026-27 federal budget to announce continuation of the Commonwealth Home Support Program for older Australians. 840,000 people across Australia use the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), including 87,000 who participate in Social Support Groups.

Vandana Rathore, Chairperson of the PICAC Alliance said that,

“CHSP also plays a critical early intervention role, helping older people stay independent for longer. CHSP funded Social Support Groups combined with transport support can be a powerful antidote to isolation and boredom as risk factors for depression and help keep our valued older members of our community out of more costly forms of care. Retaining the CHSP also has the added potential to reduce co-contribution pressures for the 87,000 older people participating in Social Support Groups”

“Also, the CHSP Sector Support and Development (SSD) is a crucial part of the infrastructure that helps providers remain capable, connected and reform ready, supporting culturally safe practice, workforce development, community engagement and acting as a trusted bridge between communities and services, and we are calling for continued funding for SSD to support CHSP.”

The government intends to transition this program to a vastly different funding model under the Support at Home (SAH) program which is suitable for highly individualised care, like showering and home cleaning, but less well suited to group based participation in social inclusion and wellness activities and associated transport supports.

Ms. Rathore explained,

Support at Home will confuse participants with far greater complexity and burden many small community organisations with far more costly overheads to contract with and invoice each participant. Of particular concern are the one in five participants from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background and the wonderful small CALD groups and associations that receive only this funding and who, at low cost to the taxpayer, provide a lifeline for isolated CALD seniors and their carers.

We are extremely worried that these groups will disappear if their funding model is too burdensome - well in excess of the established performance reporting and financial acquittal procedures already in place for the Commonwealth Home Support Program. The Support At Home program risks completely obliterating these small organisations with costly red tape with no clear benefit.

She suggested that,

A balanced approach would be for the Commonwealth government to continue the option for providers who only deliver one or two home support service types – especially Social Support Groups and Transport – to continue to be funded through a block grant under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

The PICAC Alliance is also calling for:

- Additional funding for Support At Home packages to offset the significant additional time required when the older individual and aged care providers need to communicate through an interpreting service.
- Increased funding for the PICAC Alliance to ensure adequate cultural safety training for the half million aged care workers in Australia,
- An innovation fund to undertake important research into smarter care such as designing and safely implementing digital technologies and artificial intelligence tools for interpreting and translation in aged care.

For media enquiries contact Sophie Miller: info@culturaldiversity.com.au or via 0436 947 418

The members of the PICAC Alliance

- Multicultural Aged Care Inc – PICAC SA / Secretariat
- Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing – PICAC VIC
- Multicultural Communities Council Illawarra – PICAC NSW & ACT
- Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania - PICAC Tasmania
- Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland- PICAC QLD
- COTA NT – PICAC NT
- Fortis Consulting WA – PICAC WA