



# Supporting Choice and a Healthy Long Life

Australians are choosing to receive care in their own homes as they grow older, to be closer to family and their community. To support this choice the Government is providing more funding for in-home aged care.

Good physical and mental health is an important part of being able to make the most of the opportunities that a longer life brings.

### More choice in home care

The Government's **Home Care Packages Program** (home care) helps Australians who choose to access aged care in their homes, by providing assistance with their day-to-day activities.

An increasing number of Australians are choosing to receive their care at home. To support this choice, the More Choices for a Longer Life Package is investing \$1.6 billion in 14,000 additional high level home care packages.

Since last Budget, the Government has committed to deliver an additional 20,000 high level home care packages over the next four years for people with high level needs. This will mean that by 2021-22, over 74,000 high level home care packages will be available, an increase of 86 per cent on 2017-18.

For more information on home care visit the Department of Health's website [agedcare.health.gov.au](http://agedcare.health.gov.au).

### Investing in the mental health of Australians

To support the mental health of older Australians the Government is providing \$82.5 million to fund mental health services for residents of aged care facilities, who can face barriers to accessing mainstream services.

The Government is also funding \$20 million to pilot services for older Australians at risk of isolation to help them remain connected to their community.

### Supporting older Australians to remain active and independent

Physical activity and staying active and independent are important for health and wellbeing.

The Government is supporting the physical health of older Australians by:

- Providing \$22.9 million to encourage them to remain physically active; and
- Undertaking a trial of support strategies worth \$29.2 million to help them stay independent for longer in their own home.

### Guaranteeing Medicare and providing record health funding

The Government is providing record levels of funding for public hospital services with a new five-year public hospital funding agreement that will deliver more than \$30 billion in additional funding between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

The **Medicare Guarantee Fund** is continuing to guarantee funding for the **Medicare Benefits Schedule** and the **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme**, ensuring that Australians can be certain that they will continue to have access to the essential health care services they need.

Bulk billing for GP visits in Australia remains at record levels with 84.3 per cent of GP visits in 2016-17 being bulk billed; this is 3 million more bulk billed visits than occurred in 2015-16.