

## Establish a cross-government state and federal taskforce to develop solutions that ensure aged care services meet the needs of patients stranded in hospitals.

### Overview

- According to the latest [Productivity Commission](#) Report on Government Services 2022-23,
  - 4,022 people in public hospitals waited 35 days or more for admission to residential aged care or needed assistance at home with no other household member available to provide care.
  - People eligible and waiting for residential aged care represented a total of 438,779 patient days in 2022-23 across hospitals in Australia.
- The situation of older people stranded in hospital is worsening and requires urgent attention. It negatively affects older people who should be discharged home or transferred to appropriate residential care. It also has flow on impacts for the health and hospital system contributing to delays in access to hospital for all.
- The needs of older people stranded in hospital must be prioritised within the aged care system by addressing shortfalls in aged care services.
- Three cohorts are notably overrepresented in the stranded patient data – people with dementia, people from non-metropolitan areas, and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

### WHAT ARE WE CALLING FOR?

- The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing should convene an emergency taskforce made up of federal, state, and territory health officials, aged care providers, consumer representatives, and experts. This task force will develop a comprehensive action plan to address the specific needs of stranded patients and engage in ongoing monitoring of any response.
- One of its primary actions should be to identify changes to aged care funding models to quickly increase bed capacity for target groups and to ensure providers have adequate funding to address specific cohorts with higher needs, such as those associated with dementia.

### Budget impact

- The main expense will be resourcing for secretariat and support functions, ensuring the taskforce operates effectively. We acknowledge that significant new funds will be required to ensure that services exist where they are needed and to meet the complex needs of older people and welcome [the announcement](#) of \$2 billion over four years as part of the solution. Government may need to further explore revenue models to ensure government can meet demands sustainability.

