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### A step in right direction for older Australians waiting for care

National Seniors Australia (NSA) has welcomed the announcement that 20,000 new Home Care packages will be released ahead of the enactment of the new Aged Care Act on 1 November.

NSA Chief Executive Officer Mr Chris Grice said older Australians waiting for care, and their families, will welcome today's news which sees the delivery of 40,000 packages up to the end of 2025 and another 43,000 within the first six months of 2026.

"NSA has been advocating for the immediate release of new packages to help begin the process of reducing the home care waiting list – we are glad to see compassion, care, and commonsense prevail," Mr Grice said.

"The release of new packages is recognition that we can't delay reducing the wait list. It's a down payment on providing care and support more quickly to older people who need it.

"One of the key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, more than four years ago, was that government should clear the home care wait list so that older people wait only one month for services. The release of new packages inches us closer to that goal.

"There is a question about what level these packages will be. We hope these are not only Level 1 packages, but include packages for people with higher care needs, particularly those stranded in the hospital system.

"The government will still have its work cut out for it to address the tens of thousands of older people waiting for care and waiting to be assessed for care, but the release of 20,000 packages is certainly a start.

"We must remember that it's not only older people impacted by delays. It's also loved ones, who provide the support when home care services are not available.

"We hope and expect those most in need, including those stuck in hospital, will gain access to these new packages, allowing them to age at home, which is understandably their preference.

"NSA thanks all generous individuals who shared their experiences, whose stories helped to shed light on the difficulties faced by older people waiting for care, and the challenges of the many loved ones supporting them. You have made a difference."

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