$35 million investment to reduce the number of younger people in residential aged care

22 December 2021

The Australian Government is investing an additional $35 million to continue delivering on its commitment to reduce the number of younger people entering, and living in, residential aged care.

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Linda Reynolds CSC and Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services Richard Colbeck said the investment will ensure younger people currently living in residential aged care receive the tailored support necessary to ensure that where they have a goal to leave aged care they can do so.

The funding provided as part of the 2021-22 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO), will reduce the number of people entering aged care and support a greater number of people to leave residential aged care between 2022 and the end of 2025.

The funding includes:

- $16 million for the Department of Health to extend the current Younger People in Residential Aged Care (YPIRAC) System Coordinator Program to engage with younger people who are not NDIS participants. This is on top of $10.1 million announced in the 2020-21 Budget for Health to establish a national network of up to 40 YPIRAC System Coordinators to help younger people find appropriate accommodation and supports.
- Around $18.9 million for additional National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) staff to help younger NDIS participants, their families, carers and support coordinators to explore reasonable and necessary supports to meet their home and living goals. The new team will complement the NDIA's existing 80 YPIRAC Planners who work with NDIS participants to ensure their plans reflect their housing goals as well as all other supports.

Minister Reynolds said the initiatives will help the Government meet its targets to have no younger people under the age of 45 living in residential aged care by 2022, and under the age of 65 by 2025 (other than in exceptional circumstances).

"This Government has prioritised the provision of choice to younger people in residential aged care, and while there has been significant progress in reducing the number of younger people entering and living in residential aged care over the past 12 months, more needs to be done," Minister Reynolds said.

The 2020/21 YPIRAC annual report , released today, shows from 30 June 2020 to 30 June 2021 there was a:

- 43 per cent reduction in the number of younger people entering residential aged care (712) compared to the previous 12 months (1,250)
- 23 per cent reduction in the number of people under the age of 45 living in residential aged care from 130 to 100.

- 20 per cent reduction in people under the age of 65 living in residential aged care from 4,858 to 3,899.

“The investment in additional dedicated NDIA YPIRAC Planners will ensure participants are supported to navigate the multiple and complex systems required to source age-appropriate accommodation to transition younger people out of residential aged care,” Minister Reynolds said.

In August, the NDIA also launched an interactive tool (SDA Finder) to help participants find suitable Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) vacancies across Australia.

Minister Reynolds said the MYEFO initiatives will complement this tool and assist younger people in residential aged care to explore alternative housing, and work closely with their families and carers, to identify and achieve their home and living goals, while building their capacity and confidence to engage with the community.

Minister Colbeck said the annual report reflects the collaborative effort of the federal Government with states and territories, advocates and younger people themselves, towards the targets established in response to the Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care.

“The aged care system was designed to best support the needs of senior Australians, not younger people,” Minister Colbeck said.

Minister Colbeck said it was clear activities being progressed by the Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, sector stakeholders and younger people themselves, were contributing to significant reductions in the number of younger people entering, and living in, residential aged care.

Minister Reynolds said younger people living in, or at risk of entering, residential aged care, are being supported to exercise genuine choice and control.

“We want younger people to have the care and support they need to live life on their terms and although there is more work to be done, we are making positive progress,” she said.

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