



Rebekha Sharkie MP

Federal Member for Mayo



MEDIA RELEASE

ADVOCACY CHANGES GOVERNMENT AGED CARE PRIORITIES

Federal Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie has welcomed the Government's move to prioritise sufferers of Motor Neurone Disease (MND) in Aged Care - but says it should not have taken her determined advocacy to get action.

On Tuesday, Ms Sharkie asked a question in Parliament about Mount Barker resident, Greg, who has MND. Sadly, Greg is only expected to live another 12 months but was assessed as medium priority by the Department for higher level Aged Care *Support at Home*.

"For someone living with MND, time is something they simply don't have. The fact that Greg was assessed as only a medium priority despite having a terminal condition raises serious questions about whether the Support at Home system is delivering care to those who need it most," Ms Sharkie said.

Ms Sharkie had contacted the Aged Care Minister about Greg several weeks prior to asking the question in Parliament. Yesterday, the Minister telephoned Ms Sharkie, informing her that people with MND will now be given urgent priority access to *Support at Home*.

"I'm grateful for the decision to prioritise older people with MND, but the Government has really been too slow on this. No family facing any terminal diagnosis should have to spend their final months dealing with delays, uncertainty and administrative hurdles," Ms Sharkie said.

"Greg's story is heartbreaking, but sadly it's not unique. My office continues to hear from older Australians and their families who are waiting months and, in some cases, up to a year for the care they have been assessed as needing."

The Government has also announced it will rapidly review its *Support at Home* prioritisation mechanism.

"This is a good start, but there is still a long way to go," Ms Sharkie said.

"The Government promised that *Support at Home* would deliver a better and more responsive aged care system. Yet since its introduction, my office has continued to receive desperate calls from families who cannot understand why approved care is not reaching their loved ones."

"Australians deserve an aged care system that responds to need, not one that leaves vulnerable people waiting."

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