



Rebekha Sharkie MP

Federal Member for Mayo



MEDIA RELEASE

Aged Care System Failing as Record Number of Older South Australians Stuck in Hospitals

Federal Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie MP is calling for urgent action to address the growing shortage of aged care places, after new figures revealed a record 487 older South Australians are medically ready to leave hospital but are stuck, waiting for aged care.

“These are not just numbers on a data sheet. These are older Australians who should be receiving the care and support they need in an appropriate setting, not spending weeks, or even months, in a hospital bed because there’s nowhere else for them to go,” Ms Sharkie said.

“The fact that this number has reached 487 should be a wake-up call.

“Our hospitals are already under enormous pressure, and this is making that worse.

“Hospital is not an appropriate long-term environment for an older person who no longer needs acute medical care. It can lead to loss of strength, poorer health outcomes and, particularly for people living with dementia, increased distress and confusion.”

Ms Sharkie said the crisis highlighted the need for better investment across the entire aged care system, including residential places and support to remain safely at home.

“We need to look at every aspect of the system and make sure people can readily access the right care, where and when they need it.

“That includes ensuring the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) provides timely and practical assistance to help older people remain independent and safely at home.

“It also means ensuring that the transition to Support at Home delivers the services people need.

“CHSP, Support at Home and residential aged care are all connected. If one part of the system isn’t working, the pressure is felt across the entire aged care and health system.

“I’ve spoken to older Australians, their families and aged care providers who are struggling to navigate a system that often leaves people waiting far too long for the support they need.

“The Federal Government needs to work urgently with the South Australian Government to increase aged care capacity, address delays in assessments and package delivery, and ensure there are enough in-home and residential care options available.

“Older Australians deserve better than being left in hospital because the aged care system is failing them.

“Their families deserve certainty that when a loved one needs care, there will be somewhere appropriate for them to go.

“We need a system that puts the dignity, choice and wellbeing of older Australians at the heart.”

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