

THE VOICE of Pensioners and Superannuants

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The Govt's plan to *keep* the Home Care Packages waiting list



THE Aged Care Royal Commission recommended that the Australian Government get rid of the waiting list for Home Care Packages (HCPs) by 31 December 2021.

The Department of Health has now clarified how it is going to roll out a total of 101,000 new Home Care Packages (80,000 announced on Budget night plus 21,000 packages previously announced) to clear the waiting list.

The Government will roll out 12,000 level 4 packages for the 12,113 people waiting for a level 4 package on 31 December 2020. There's no margin for new additional demand.

37,000 level 3 packages will be rolled out to cover 34,283 people waiting. This covers current demand, but with a slender margin of 2,600 packages to meet new additional demand.

A similar thing will happen with level 2 packages. 36,000 will be rolled out to cover a level 2 waiting list of 35,230 people, a margin of 800 packages to meet new additional demand.

The Department's estimate of new additional demand for level 2, 3 and 4 packages over the four years covered by May's Budget is 3,400 packages, or 850 packages a year. This is scarcely believable.

But the Home Care Packages program will be flooded with 16,450 level 1 packages rolled out when a mere 3,384 people were waiting for a level 1 package on 31 December 2020!

Why?

As the Department stated during a Senate Estimates Committee hearing: "For level 1, we are actually projecting that we will need less than what we had previously predicted because most people will be getting their approved level package. A lot of the level 1s are usually used for interims".

In other words, the Department is roughly meeting current demand, but new additional demand will be given level 1 interims. Recipients will then be on the waiting list for a higher level package.

CPSA believes that it is unlikely even current demand will be met, because to do that, you need \$7.9 billion over four years, not the \$6.5 billion the Government has allocated.

The Department of Health is working on a "new support at home program", which will start up in 2023-24. This new program will effectively merge the Home Care Packages program and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme. However, no funding has been allocated to the new program as yet. It is therefore very likely that, while the Home Care Packages waiting list will disappear with the Home Care Packages program, a new waiting list will spring up.

COVID-19 passport is here!



THE Australian Government has announced that everyone who has received all required doses of their COVID-19 vaccination can now access the recently launched COVID-19 digital certificate.

If you can't get proof online, your vaccination provider can print your immunisation history statement for you. You can also call the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809 and ask for your statement to be sent out to you.

Once your provider has reported both doses of an approved vaccine, you'll be able to access your COVID-19 digital certificate online through myGov or in the Express Plus Medicare app. This requires your Medicare account to be linked to myGov.

While the Government has announced that the COVID-19 digital certificate is now available, it has not announced how it's going to be used. It's called a certificate, but passport will probably turn out to be a better word for it in the end.

It may be required to gain entry to shops, cinemas, theatres, museums, public transport and flights. The question is whether the Australian and State and Territory Governments are going to regulate the use of the COVID-19 passport.

There's no answer just yet, but the COVID-19 passport has arrived!

What the future holds for NSW



THE future citizens of New South Wales will be older and much less likely to own their own home, according to the recently released 2021-22 NSW Intergenerational Report.

The report which was released on 7 June is published every 5 years by the NSW Treasury Department in which Treasury makes forecasts on key areas such as demographics and housing to give an insight into how NSW might look 40 years from now.

The report says there will be an additional 3.3 million people living in NSW and the average life expectancy will increase from 85.9 to 91.7 for women and from 82.2 to 89.4 for men. Given the increased population and longer life expectancies the report says 42,000 new homes will need to be built every year over the next four decades to support population growth.

NSW Treasury started publishing these reports in 2006 and every report has suggested that the NSW population is rapidly ageing, and homeownership is declining. However, looking at the investment in social housing you would think otherwise.

The NSW Tenants' Union community legal centre tracks the NSW Government's housing commitments and has reported that the NSW

Government is currently committed to building 1,000 new social housing homes every year over the next 15 years. This leaves the private construction industry to pick up the slack and build 41,000 homes every year to meet the NSW Government's own projected housing needs.

It is not clear if the 42,000 homes needed to be built every year will include affordable housing, which is already an issue today. Based on 2016 data, the [City Futures Research Centre calculated](#) that 137,100 people in NSW on low incomes are unable to access affordable housing because it is not available in the private market and there aren't enough social housing dwellings available.

In 2019 there were over 50,000 households on the social housing waiting list. The Intergenerational Report did not indicate how long it expects the waiting list to be in 2061 but without significant investment in social and affordable housing, the social housing waiting list will grow and more people will go without access to affordable housing with security of tenure.