

The Productivity Commission Inquiry: Caring for Older Australians

My thoughts briefly are as follows

- There are political policy decisions to be made:
about residential and community care numbers – are the formula both for Commonwealth support based on aged 70 to give the number of beds/places for the community (should be older!) and the proportion between high level (nursing home), low level (hostel) and community care right?
and whether retirement villages should be brought into appropriate legislative control in this area (may be should just as supported residential facilities were).
- There continues to be confusion even in this document as to what aged care refers to: is it residential care with those organizations also providing care in the community or the Commonwealth/StateHACC-funded programs or the care of older people in the community in general or the care of older people in hospital or geriatric medicine services that specialize in the best care outcomes for older people (just as cardiology does for heart disease): but whatever, the resulting system needs to be coordinated and linked and based on expertise in care of the elderly.
- The elderly do not equate to the excessive cost of care as per recent (2010) Sydney paper despite the ageist myth frequently perpetrated.
- Slow stream rehabilitation does not seem to exist as a concept depriving a group of older people the possibility of supported recovery over time and condemning them to residential care with little likelihood of discharge as resources have usually been dispersed.
- There needs to be recognition of the role of specialist geriatric medicine services in acute hospitals and across the system to assist in quality care outcomes for older people.

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