

## ACSA Meeting with Ken Wyatt, Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health

Dear Members,

I am writing following a visit to Parliament House with Pat Sparrow last week. Thank you to those who gave feedback on our priority order, much appreciated.

It was great to be with Pat when visiting parliamentarians as her knowledge and connections are impressive. Pat navigated through the maze of Parliament House, acknowledging the many people of all political persuasions she is recognised by.

We met with Ken Wyatt, Minister for Aged Care and Indigenous Health and discussed with him the concerns raised by members. In particular ;

- Increased investment in home care to reduce the 100,000 waiting list for packages as well as addressing allocation issues (consumer decision time and treatment of unspent funds) and the assessment process;
- Funding sustainability and increasing payment for those consumers who can afford to contribute more to the cost of their care;
- Right-sizing regulation rather than just adding additional reporting which doesn't advance the quality of care
- Addressing viability for rural and regional providers and rethinking the funding and service models that work in those areas;
- Equity of access to health – including mental and oral health - services for aged care residents

Minister Wyatt acknowledged the issues and impact on providers and Pat and I shared real examples from member services highlighting the importance. Pat provided clear evidence on the funding pressure of our members, with recent Stewart Brown data highlighting that 50% of providers will be operating at a loss in the near future without further action. We also met with Julie Collins and Senator Rachel Siewert, who was very well informed.

ACSA held a function about ageing and food in partnership with COTA and the Parliamentary Friends. Maggie Beer presented in a very positive light supporting the aged care sector well. This event was successful in drawing the attention of many politicians and their advisers to our sector.

I also saw the very long hours the politicians and advisers put in during this time of year when parliament is sitting and the enormous amount of information they are required to digest. Not to mention the scrutiny in regard to their private lives! Having said that, I felt heartened that overall, our Parliament is impressive and we clearly have a well-functioning governance system getting through policy, debating and thrashing out matters of national importance and listening to people like us.

You can be confident your ACSA is effectively delivering your messages to those who can make decisions in Canberra and is actively keeping up the pressure and focus.

Regards,  
Sara Blunt, ACSA Chairperson