

## **THE FUTURE OF AGED CARE**

Under its recent Living Longer, Living Better proposals, the Australian government is making some major changes to the aged care system. The following is a summary of the major reforms.

### **Removal of distinction between low and high care**

Residents may remain in the same facility as their care needs change from low to high. At the moment, the majority of facilities are either low or high.

### **Increase in home care packages available and fairer means testing for these packages**

This will enable people to stay in their homes longer before requiring aged care and those who are able will contribute towards the cost of these packages.

### **Cap on the 'care fees' in aged care**

This cap applies to home care packages and aged care fees. The 'care fee' is means tested, so essentially a cap means that if you require home care packages or aged care, your 'user pays' fee is capped.

### **Ability to choose how to fund bonds**

The removal of distinction between low care (bonds payable) and high care (no bonds - rather a daily accommodation charge) means more people will be required to pay a bond to enter into an aged care facility. This means more flexibility in paying the bond is required.

### **Expansion of respite services**

Some facilities currently have a waiting list of up to 12 months for respite services. Respite allows carers to have a break. If more home packages means more people staying at home longer, then it follows that an increase in respite services is needed.

*This information is provided as a community service by the Kangaroo Valley Seniors Accommodation and Support Committee.*