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## Media Release

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27 January 2011

### The report is out - 'Caring for Older Australians'

Richard Hearn, Resthaven Chief Executive Officer, says, 'The release of the Productivity Commission's draft report, 'Caring for Older Australians', offers an opportunity for much-needed reform of the aged care system in Australia.'

'The Government has a critical responsibility to ensure that older Australians have access to high quality care and support that maximises their independence and quality of life.'

'There is no doubt that Australia's aged care system requires significant reform – reform to ensure viability, reform to ensure quality and accountability, reform to enable an adequate workforce for future growth and most critically, reform that meets the needs of older people.'

'The broader debate by stakeholders identifies that the current system is not sustainable, and the viability of the sector is a critical factor in the reform process. The detail as to how the Productivity Commission report addresses this issue needs significant analysis.'

'Overall, it is a bold report, heralding major changes. However, we need to consider and assess the recommendations in detail and respond to the invitation offered by the Commission to provide them with critical thinking about the report and the recommendations''

'From what I have read so far, it is clear that the Productivity Commission has given key consideration to the 487 submissions from older Australians, their carers, aged care providers, government agencies and other interested parties. The report brings together a number of critical aspects of aged care often debated but considered in isolation of each other. In this sense it reflects significant and comprehensive change - greater than some may have expected. The report acknowledges the issues of sustainability and workforce challenges, and identifies potential for a system with a greater focus on user-pays outcomes for those who have wealth. It seeks to ensure access to services by those in need, as they are entitled to receive, and offer choice in the process.'

'We need less, simpler, smarter regulation and appropriate accountability for service providers. These will be matters that the report will be assessed against. The reduction of complex paper work and red tape within the system could be given greater priority in the implementation phase, as an indication of commitment to real change. A number of such changes have been identified in the report ''

'I believe that some regulation of the system is necessary, so that people who are vulnerable or have limited means receive the same access to quality care and accommodation support as those who can afford to pick and choose the arrangement that best suits them, and to change services and providers if they choose to do so.'

'From a service provider perspective, we will look critically at this review to see how the proposed changes offer organisations like Resthaven the ability to fulfill our mission into the future, to serve older people and respond to their needs, providing quality services in a sustainable service system ''

'Entitlement to aged care services should be based on assessed need, with user pays for those able, and the ability to enable a seamless movement within and across the various options in the community and residential care.'



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'The reforms will take some time to implement, and it is important that the transition to any new system is not rushed, allowing for adjustments as the need arises. The timeframes offered appear ambitious on first glance but will be looked at more closely in coming weeks.'

'It is critical that the positive changes that the Government adopts from this report are managed in a well planned and time considered manner, so as not to overwhelm the service system, given the pressures that already exist, and are felt by dedicated, caring staff doing their important, good work.'

ENDS/