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Older Aussies to benefit from aged care moves

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Darren Birbeck



The end of February marks three years since the release of the final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

So, what has changed and what does this mean for older Australians?

One of the most significant initiatives was the release of 80,000 home care packages over two years in 2021-22 and a further 9500 released last year.

This has given older Australians more access to the additional care and support they need while continuing to live in their own home.

This increase has dramatically changed the way in which aged care is delivered across Australia, with a distinct shift towards home care.

The number of people receiving home care packages now exceeds the number of active residential aged care places, and is forecast to reach 285,100 by June this year.

Residential aged care provides a vital service for people who require higher



levels of care. As the population ages, the demand for residential aged care will continue to grow.

However, this will be eclipsed by the continued growth of home care services.

Expanding the role of the Independent Pricing Authority to include aged care has provided much needed transparency and will ensure that funding is directly informed by the actual costs of delivering care.

While the Minister for Health and Aged Care makes the final determination on the price for aged care services, we can all take confidence from the fact that there is an independent body overseeing this process.

Since the Royal Commission, there has been a significant increase in the minutes of care provided to residents living in residential aged care.

While it can be debated whether the introduction of mandatory care minutes was the best way to achieve this, there is no doubt that it is an improved outcome for older people.

Direct care workers benefited from a significant pay increase last year, as part of the work value case, which was funded by the government.

Aged care workers who were excluded from this increase will find out whether they will also receive an increase later this year.

The changes to the aged care sector in the last three years have been significant.

While there is still more reform on the horizon, the outlook is far brighter than it was three years ago.

Darren Birbeck is the chief executive officer of Resthaven Incorporated