

## **PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION INQUIRY INTO**

### **CARING FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS**

**(Services Funded by Ageing, Disability & Home Care  
Department of Human Services)**

**Submitted by: Aged & Disability Services  
Mosman Municipal Council**

Mosman Municipal Council is located in Sydney's northern suburbs - about 6 kilometres from the Sydney GPO. The Mosman Council area is bounded by Middle Harbour in the north and north-east, Port Jackson in the east and south, and the North Sydney Council area in the west.

The Mosman Council area is predominantly a residential area, but also has some military use in the eastern section, significant bushlands and beaches along the harbours, and substantial commercial areas. The main commercial areas are from Spit Junction to Mosman Junction, along Military Road. The Council area encompasses a total land area of about 9 square kilometres.

The population of the Mosman LGA is 25,759 with 21% of the population over the age of 60. Analysis of the age structure of the Mosman Council area taken from the 2006 Census of Population & Housing, compared to the Sydney Statistical Division, shows that there was a larger proportion of people in the older age groups (60+) in Mosman i.e. + 4.3%.

Mosman Municipal Council is funded by the Ageing, Disability & Home Care Department of Human Services to provide the following services to frail older residents, younger residents with a disability and their carers:

- Food Services (Meals on Wheels, Community Restaurant)
- Social Support
- Community Transport
- Information, Referral, Support & Advocacy
- Aged & Disability Services Aged Care Worker

The level of funding is not sufficient to cover all the expenditure incurred in the operation of these services and Council generally covers the shortfall. As a result there has not been a need to limit access to services by clients and currently there are no waiting lists. On occasion, Social Support will have one or two clients not suitable for volunteer support in which case, the Social Support Coordinator or another paid worker provides assistance.

In addition to services funded by ADHC, Mosman Council provides other services, programs and activities for its older residents as follows:

- Mosman Square Seniors Centre offering many activities/programs for people over the age of 55.
- Saturday Respite Program for Carers; in partnership with the Mosman Day Centre (NSCCAHS)
- Carers Support Program.
- Men's Shed

Mosman Council's Aged & Disability Services staff met to discuss the quality, delivery and effectiveness of Aged & Disability Services funded by ADHC. A summary of the consultation is as follows:

- Mosman Council's service delivery to its older residents and those with a disability is enhanced by the location of the ADHC funded services being in one office. This enables staff to coordinate service delivery, making it more effective and responsive to changing client needs. Also, if there are any clients of concern it is easy for staff to call a meeting to discuss the best way to address these needs quickly and effectively.
- Residents often go to their local Council in the first instance to ask questions about what is available to help them with a problem. By having Aged & Disability Services as part of Council services, clients are less likely to be given the 'run around' or receive the wrong information or pointed in the wrong direction. It's like being a 'one stop aged care shop' for the LGA i.e. residents call Aged & Disability Services with a problem or need for services, they are assessed by Council's Community Worker who then refers them on to the services they need. Some services are located at the Council such as Meals on Wheels and Community Transport; others are external services offered in the local region such as Home Care, the Linen Service and Home Maintenance. The bottom line is people do not have to go further than their local Council to get the assistance they need. Councils' in general have policies that are customer focused and tend to be very responsive to their rate payers needs.
- Council's have the infrastructure already established for management including human resources with structured policies for recruitment and training, financial planning and accountability, Occupational, Health & Safety etc. Many community service groups have voluntary 'Boards of Management' and the success or failure of the service depends on how well skilled are the members of the Board.

Aged & Disability Services staff also remarked on practices/services/programs that could be improved:

- Innovative programs and services established as a result of consultations in the local community are often not recognised as worthy to receive funding assistance. In some ways it would be better to give an organisation/Council a fixed amount of money to run services that best supports their community's need.
- Insufficient recognition/funding for established services that are clearly needed in the community and develop waiting lists because funding does not meet the increased need to expand the service eg. Linen Service
- Packages such as CACP's and EACH need to be reviewed as there is inconsistency in service delivery. There are long waiting lists for people with increased needs, needs that are beyond what HACC services are funded to provide yet have to because if they didn't, these people would have no support. Once people finally get onto a package, many receive inadequate service due to lack of workers who are not properly trained. This package system needs to be reviewed and made into a more workable, skilled and reliable system.
- In addition, one of the problems with people receiving a package is that they lose out on the socialisation they had before. For example, if they were going out on Community Transport (HACC funded) bus trips or being taken shopping once a week and no longer able to do so because they have gone onto a Package, they miss out seeing those people they had become friendly with on the bus. We have had a few clients move to a CACP's package not realising they could no longer go on the shopping bus or the Out & About trips with their friends. Some have considered it a reason to refuse a package even though they really need the extra care a package provides. Again, if funding was given to an organisation/Council to support their clients through various stages of independence until they required residential care, the organisation/Council could manage their clients' needs no matter what the level and there would be better continuity of service to the client.
- A few comments on Service Management and Accountability practices: Services would like to see a computer program that is friendly to all service types i.e. one multi-service program that can collect data for the MDS with a minimum of fuss. Currently there is a variety of computer programs that are used to manage services and collect data for the MDS. The input of data for the MDS takes some Coordinators days to finalise for transmission and minutes for others. There needs to be some consistency and consideration for Coordinators who are running direct services and do not have the time to spend days on inputting data for the MDS. There has to be something that is more service friendly and that would enable Coordinators to enter data easily, thus encouraging more accurate information provided to funding bodies. Also, in a multiservice organisation, such as we have at Mosman Council, there should be a computer program that can be accessed by all Coordinators (5) because they share clients. It is unproductive to have to put in the CIARR information 3 times for the same client on 3 different computer programs. They should be able to 'talk to each other' at the very least.

As far as accountability is concerned, it would be helpful if the ‘validation’ process for HACC services could be consistent each time it is undertaken. It would then allow Coordinators to build on the previous validation process instead of having to authenticate a whole new set of standards, a very lengthy and time consuming process when trying to run direct services.

- Social Support: Needs to have more funding invested because the increasing incidences of people at home living with dementia means volunteers are not suitable to assist the program. More paid Social Support workers who are professionally trained are needed to assist these clients. This has developed because of the long waiting lists for Packages and the need for HACC funded services to provide assistance until a package becomes available.
- Residential Aged Care: Residents who have lived in an area most of their lives should be able to go into Residential Aged Care Homes in the same area. Also, husbands and wives should not be separated – at the moment there is not enough accommodation for couples.

We hope the information provided to the Productivity Commission inquiry into “Caring for Older Australians” will be considered.

Cheryl Morley  
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