Consultation Aged Care Act

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Introduction

HANZA Homeshare Australia and New Zealand Alliance is the peak body for Homeshare in Australia and New Zealand www.hanza.org.au. As the Australian Government seeks to strengthen the aged care sector through the proposed Aged Care Act, HANZA believes it is imperative to explore avenues that promote innovation and enhance outcomes for older Australians. Currently the Aged Care system is very institutionalised and conservative, as a result HANZA is increasingly approached by concerned community groups seeking their own solutions to support isolated older people. We need an aged care system that recognises the potential of communities to foster innovation and drive better outcomes for older Australians. This requires collaboration from all levels of government to enable local communities to co-create, co-design, and co-deliver supports and services that meet the unique needs of older Australians.

Long Term Community Development Funding

Prioritising long term, community development funding, creates the opportunity to imagine new ways of providing support that is responsive, inclusive, and sustainable. Local communities can play a pivotal role in innovation, with key stakeholders deeply embedded and able to harness collective wisdom, resources, and ingenuity often overlooked by established Government funded services. Community development funding allows citizens and interest groups to foster supports and services in the following ways:

Community Input: By soliciting input from residents, volunteers, and community organisations, they can identify emerging needs, cultural preferences, and opportunities for innovation. This ensures that programs are relevant, culturally sensitive, and responsive to the evolving needs of older Australians within their communities.

Collaborative Partnerships: By pooling resources, expertise, and networks, organisations can access a wider range of perspectives and capabilities to develop and implement innovative solutions. Collaborative partnerships also help to build trust, foster community ownership, and maximize the impact of community development initiatives.

Co-Design and Co-Delivery: Co-design workshops, focus groups, and community forums to facilitate meaningful participation and collaboration to involve seniors, caregivers, and other

stakeholders in decision-making processes, will ensure that programs are inclusive, accessible, and reflective of community priorities.

Local Knowledge and Assets: By partnering with community leaders, grassroots organisations, and informal networks, organisations can access valuable local knowledge, cultural expertise, and informal support networks. This localised approach builds on the strengths and assets of each community, fostering resilience and sustainability.

Capacity Building at the Local Level: Community development grants can support training, resources, and mentorship to community leaders, volunteers, and grassroots organisations, enabling them to take on leadership roles and drive positive change within their neighbourhoods. This local approach enables ownership and collective responsibility for aging-related issues, leading to more sustainable outcomes.

Measuring Impact and Learning from Communities: Collaboration with local communities to measure the impact of innovative programs to learn from their experiences can be achieved by engaging residents in program evaluation, feedback sessions, and reflective practices. Groups can assess the effectiveness of their interventions, identify areas for improvement, and refine their approaches over time. This iterative process of learning and adaptation ensures that programs remain responsive to the evolving needs and preferences of local communities.

Summary

Supporting local communities through community development funding will drive innovation in support and care of older Australians through co-creation, collaboration, and co-delivery programs that meet needs at an individual level but are able to be delivered with scale across the community. By leveraging the knowledge, assets, and expertise within each community, organizations can develop innovative solutions that are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and sustainable in the long term. Therefore long term community development funding should be made available and the standards that underpin the Aged Care system should explicitly state all organisations funded to provide aged care:

- Connect with and collaborate with the communities they provide care and support within
- Services and supports are co-designed and co- delivered with elders and their families