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Productivity Commission report into aged care focuses on the community care that defines Medicare Locals

The Australian General Practice Network [AGPN] says the Productivity Commission report, *Caring for Older Australians* is geared for Medicare Locals to help to improve the access, accountability and choice of services that should be available for older Australians requiring aged care services.

AGPN Chair, Dr Emil Djakic said for too long the health and aged care sectors have not coordinated well to streamline services which is fundamental to providing a better standard of care for older Australians.

"The Commission's concepts around a *Gateway* will provide the right platform for Medicare Locals to work with the aged care sector and to ultimately link the primary health care sector with aged care services," Dr Djakic said.

"The report's recommendation that the Gateway agency be aligned where possible, with Medicare Local and Local Hospital Network boundaries, is a significant step towards creating an aged care system that is easier to navigate for consumers and users.

"These structural reforms will also bring about an aged care system that is geared more towards community care and helping older Australians stay at home longer with greater independence, which is fundamental to the mental and emotional wellbeing of older Australians.

"Any structural reform that provides models of care designed to keep people out of hospital and cared for in their homes longer through GP-led multidisciplinary primary health care teams, should be the cornerstone of any aged care system," Dr Djakic said.

AGPN also welcomed the report's:

- recognition of the need for health and aged care sectors to work more closely together
- recognition of the need for increased remuneration for GPs providing care service to Ageing Australians
- recommendation of an independent review of the Medicare Rebate for GPs providing services in Residential Aged Care Facilities as well as in people's homes
- recommendation for people to be able to discuss their end of life care plans and for more health care works and GPs to be up-skilled in palliative care approaches.

"Medicare Locals along with Local Hospital Networks, will be ideally placed to work closely with the Gateway agency to ensure there is effective regional coordination of health and aged care services that meet the needs of ageing Australians across the country," Dr Djakic said.

"AGPN's response to the report will very much focus on how Medicare Locals and the Gateway agencies can work together on innovative prevention and primary health care oriented solutions for Australia's new system for aged care," Dr Djakic said.

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