



# Communique – 2 August 2023

**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission reforms** - The Council discussed the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's approach to complaints handling and the approach of local level resolution with Janet Anderson, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner and Louise Macleod, Complaints Commissioner. The Council will focus on the adequacy of protections for older people, specifically the extent to which broker platforms should be regulated and the oversight of in-home support noting the risks to older people's safety in that environment. Council talked about the benefits of mandatory provider board governance training and noted that as part of the consultation on the new Aged Care Act which the Council will be highly engaged with given the criticality of this legislation.

**Enhancing Community Involvement and engagement** The Council has established new working arrangements with the department's Diversity Consultative Committee and several peak and representative bodies, as means to increase its diversity and reach. The Diversity Committee represents people with lived experiences from diverse communities, such as LGBTIQ+ older people and those who have experienced long-term care. This also includes important views and experiences of First Nations people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Council members are also actively supporting the Regional Stewardship model by connecting regional office staff with local community organisations, including those serving culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The information the Council receives within this interaction greatly improves the quality of advice to government.

**Aged Care Taskforce** - The Council was informed about the principles under consideration by the Aged Care Taskforce, and the planned community consultations. Council also talked about the need for a communication strategy to enhance the community's understanding of the financial costs of aged care and stressed that discussion about this issue should involve the entire community, not just older individuals and their families. Council will continue to discuss matters under review and offer support to the Taskforce.

**Reform priorities** - The Council acknowledged the release of new aged care packages and welcomed information that shows that the average wait time for assessments is going down. The council raised community concerns about the Community Home Support Program, including the risk of local governments withdrawing services. Council was pleased to hear that only a small number of applications for time limited exemptions for the 24/7 nursing requirements had been received and suitable alternative clinical care arrangements have been implemented for the duration of those exemptions. Council also welcomes the community consultations on the new Aged Care Act.

**Improving job opportunities for older people in aged care** - The Council talked about ways to improve employment for older people who wish to keep working or re-enter the labour market. We noted barriers faced by older people include issues with income support and superannuation, registration requirements (especially for nurses), and limited access to private transportation, particularly in regional areas. Employment for older people is an important issue and Council agreed to continue to provide the parts of government with community perspectives to inform their work.

The next meeting of the Council of Elders will be held on 20 September 2023.