



# National Aged Care Advisory Council (NACAC)

## Communiqué – 14 August 2023

**Aged Care Taskforce:** NACAC members on the Aged Care Taskforce gave an update on its work to review funding arrangements for aged care and develop options for a system that is fair and equitable. Council noted the principles being considered by the Taskforce, expected timelines and community engagement plans. A public consultation process on these principles is currently underway, via roundtables and surveys with communities. Council suggested deep engagement of the financial planning sector in Taskforce consultations could help encourage earlier retirement planning. Certainty on consumer contributions towards aged care is a key focus for Council, to ensure reforms do not negatively impact people already in aged care system, especially financially disadvantaged people and those with limited financial flexibility.

**10-Year Ageing Well in Australia Strategy:** Council considered progress of the draft strategy which seeks to reimagine what ageing in Australia looks like over the next ten years. A long-term strategy that promotes a positive view of ageing will support the success of aged care reform. Council feedback focused on the role of a social safety net, ways to harness technology and innovation, improve responses to population diversity, using government levers to promote more fit-for-purpose housing options for older people, and options for nuanced communication strategies. Council provided feedback on use of language and tone, encouraging positive messages on ageing for people early in their adult lives, with messaging nuanced to different audiences.

**Aged Care Market Strategy:** Council provided input to the Aged Care Market Strategy (Market Strategy). The Market Strategy aims to develop a strategic, guiding framework that outlines principles the Government wants the aged care market to meet, and how the market could be shaped to align with those principles. Council discussed current and emerging challenges in the aged care market, and the importance of ensuring older Australians have equitable access to high-quality services. Council further discussed the challenges in rural and regional areas, and associated workforce capacity, supply and demand issues.

**Empowering First Nations Aged Care:** Council discussed progress of the creation of an independent First Nations Aged Care Commissioner (Commissioner) to embed a First Nations' voice within the aged care system. Council noted an interim Commissioner role will shortly be filled through an open, competitive selection process. Council is aware there is strong First Nations' support for a future permanent Commissioner to be an independent position. Once appointed, Council will support the interim Commissioner to engage broadly in consultations. Council encourages the appointee to engage early with States and Territories. Council looks forward to working with the interim Commissioner on the design and governance of the permanent position.

**Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission:** Council welcomed Janet Anderson PSM (Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner) and Louise Macleod (Complaints Commissioner) to discuss recent developments in best-practice complaints handling and options to further strengthen the aged care complaints system. Key issues included the importance of timely complaints resolution and skilled assessors; management of complaints under the new Aged Care Act; support for a risk-based approach to assessing and responding to complaints; importance of transparency in reporting for providers; use of assessments or background data to identify root causes of complaints for the Inspector-General to produce system level analyses; balancing the rights of individuals; and active oversight of provider behaviours. Council offered to assist the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner as she develops a program to respond to the Commission's independent capability review report.

**Other items discussed:** In July 2023, several aged care sector leaders had the opportunity to meet with the Netherlands Minister for Long Term Support. The meeting discussed opportunities for cross-country learning, including ensuring aged care and health systems are ready to take advantage of new Alzheimer's medications; innovative models of accommodation design in areas with restricted land; and aged care support systems that start with people's needs, in order to innovate existing services (or create flexible models of care).

The next NACAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 4 October 2023.