

# Aged Care Taskforce

## Communique 12 October 2023 meeting

The Aged Care Taskforce held its fifth meeting on 12 October 2023 in Melbourne. The Taskforce considered feedback from roundtable consultations held over September and October with residential aged care and home care providers, including those operating in thin markets, banks and superannuation funds, and First Nations and workforce representatives. Key themes from the roundtables included:

- the need to ensure funding arrangements are linked to care outcomes and facilitate participant's care needs;
- the need to consider provider reporting requirements and greater flexibility in mainstream funding arrangements to support the ability to provide quality care; and
- the need for funding arrangements to support innovation, thin markets and workforce shortages.

The Taskforce also reviewed the feedback received via the public submission process held throughout August. The vast majority of respondents recognised the need to adjust the aged care system to modernise it and make it fair, sustainable and innovative. Most felt those with capacity to contribute should make a fair contribution to their aged care costs, while stakeholders also agreed there is a need to simplify the fee system and make it easier for older people to navigate. Most individuals who participated in the consultation indicated a strong preference to age at home. Further details on the feedback will be made available on the Department of Health and Aged Care's Engagement Hub shortly.

The Taskforce is focused on ensuring Australia's aged care system can meet current and future funding challenges. The Taskforce reflected on the revenue and capital gap in the residential aged care sector, particularly in geographically thin markets. This constrains the sector's ability to deliver the required growth in facilities and services required to meet the expected growth in demand for aged care services over the next 1-2 decades. While currently viable, the sustainability of the home care sector is expected to come under pressure in coming decades as demand increases.

The Taskforce is closely considering system funding arrangements, noting the wealth of aged care participants is increasing while the proportion of working age people is shrinking. Consideration is also being given to how funding arrangements can embed innovation, promote high quality services and ensure aged care services meet the needs, preferences and circumstances of older Australians.

Taskforce members commenced consideration of potential policy options to address these challenges, for further refinement and consideration as part of the final report. Members noted the need to ensure options for the final report are considered as a combined package that is robust, fair and equitable for all Australians. Members also considered options relating to transparency, innovation, thin markets and financial products to assist people to access their wealth.