

Aged Care Taskforce

Terms of reference

Purpose

The Aged Care Taskforce (Taskforce) is established as a time-limited body to provide expert advice to government through the Minister for Aged Care. It is not a decision making or funding body.

Objectives of the Taskforce

The Taskforce will provide government with advice on funding arrangements for aged care to ensure that the aged care system is fair and equitable for all Australians. The advice should support:

- a stable policy path for the sector that encourages continuous improvement
- high quality care and an innovative and vibrant aged care sector that is driven to respond to the needs of older Australians, and
- a sustainable sector that can deliver consistent, high-quality care for generations of Australians.

The Taskforce will provide Government with options for consideration and a recommended package of reforms that ensure that:

- aged care providers are sustainably funded and benefit from introducing innovative care delivery approaches that meet older Australian's preferences,
- aged care funding is affordable for the Commonwealth with arrangements that balance equity and fairness between older and working-aged Australians,
- older Australians can see the value of their contributions relative to other funding sources,
- there is a robust safety net that properly recognises financial capacity at different levels of income and/or life circumstances, and
- contribution arrangements are efficient, simple to implement, and easily understood by all Australians, particularly older people.

Specifically, the Taskforce will provide advice on:

- funding and contribution approaches to support innovation in the delivery of care,
- a fair and equitable approach to assessing the means of older people accessing residential and in-home aged care, including the scope of income and assets included in the assessment of means,
- issues and trade-offs for including and excluding different service types in the new in-home aged care program (the service list),
- consumer contributions for in-home aged care, and reforms that support a future transition to a single in-home aged care system, and
- reforms to arrangements for pricing and funding hotel and accommodation costs in residential aged care, including the phasing out of refundable accommodation deposits.

The Taskforce may be asked to consider other related issues in the course of their work.

The Taskforce will provide government with options for consideration and a recommended package in December 2023. It will also provide interim advice in October 2023.

Recommendations made by the Taskforce will be considered by government.

Context

The government has committed to delivering aged care reform that restores dignity to aged care and ensures that older Australians are treated with the respect that they deserve. This includes reforming the in-home aged care system so that it better responds to the changing needs of older people and is simpler to understand and navigate.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the government's response has established foundational reforms that will deliver higher quality, stronger regulation, more transparency and greater choice. While the Royal Commission made a number of recommendations on funding and contribution approaches for aged care, including means testing and the possibility of a levy, the Commissioners had differing views. The Taskforce will consider the Royal Commission's views in its deliberations.

The Taskforce provides an opportunity for targeted and thorough consideration of system funding arrangements to ensure that they are equitable, embed innovation, and include a future focus that adjusts to the changing pattern of demographics, needs and circumstances of older Australians, including consideration of women, indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse people. There have been increasing calls from the sector, from both aged care providers and consumer organisations, for older Australians in aged care to contribute more towards their care where they have capacity to do so in order to improve the sustainability of the sector.

Membership

The Taskforce will be chaired by the Minister for Aged Care. The Chair may appoint a proxy to Chair all or part of a meeting at their sole discretion.

Taskforce Members are appointed as experts and policy leaders with the ability to provide representative advice for their respective sector. However, while they may represent the views of their organisation or affiliations, they agree to come together in the best interests of older people and Australia's aged care system. Proxies will not be accepted except under exceptional circumstances and at the sole discretion of the Chair. A list of members is at Attachment A.

Taskforce members are eligible for remuneration. The Taskforce will be a Departmental non-statutory committee, managed according to the Department's External Committee Framework.

Non-government members may seek reimbursement for their travel and other incidental expenses equivalent to the Department of Health and Aged Care Senior Executive Service-level policies.

The Chair may approve ad hoc, participation of additional experts or observers in meetings as required.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Members will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement and declare any real or perceived conflicts of interest before the first meeting. Members will advise of any changes in their real or potential conflicts of interest at the commencement of each meeting. A member

who has declared a real or potential conflict of interest may participate in the discussion on that matter, subject to the approval of the Chair.

All discussions undertaken by the Taskforce are in strict confidence and without prejudice, to ensure members can genuinely engage on the merits of proposals. Discussions should not be considered as agreement or commitment by government.

All documents prepared by or presented to the Taskforce are assumed to be confidential unless identified otherwise by the Chair. Taskforce members shall not report or attribute comments of individuals nor their affiliations outside of meetings.

Meeting Administration

The Chair will lead meetings and guide the work of the Taskforce.

It is expected that meetings will be held monthly for a duration of 3-5 hours. A forward schedule of meetings will be developed, noting that flexibility may be required to accommodate unavoidable rescheduling. Quorum is at the discretion of the Chair.

An agenda and papers will be distributed at least 5 days prior to meetings. Papers may be developed by a Member or the Department of Health and Aged Care, at the request of the Chair. Papers will follow an agreed format according to the guidance supplied by the Secretariat.

Members are expected to attend meetings in person. Videoconferencing will be available for those with unavoidable commitments, such as isolation requirements or overseas travel.

A summary of key discussion points and action items will be distributed to representatives within five days following meetings. A communiqué will be prepared following each meeting

for members and the Department of Health and Aged Care to disseminate to other interested parties. Detailed minutes will not be produced.

The Taskforce will aim to reach consensus on the final recommendations to government. A final report or communiqué will be developed. Dissenting views will be noted by the Chair.

Departmental officials may attend the meeting at the request of the Chair.

The Taskforce will operate from June 2023 until 31 December 2023, unless stated by the Chair.

Attachment A – membership

- The Hon Anika Wells (Chair)
- Nigel Ray PSM (Deputy Chair)
- The Hon Mike Baird AO
- Professor Tom Calma AO
- Grant Corderoy
- Pat Garcia
- Rosemary Huxtable PSM
- Professor John McCallum
- Mary Patetsos AM
- Juliane Samara
- Pat Sparrow
- Tom Symondson
- Janine Walker AM
- Thomas Walker
- Margaret Walsh OAM
- Lloyd Williams