



Communique 26 June 2024

Reform Priorities and Progress - The Council supports the Government's goal to introduce the new Aged Care Bill as soon as the details of Support at Home and consumer contributions in response to the Aged Care Taskforce are finalised. Council recognises the significant scope of the reform package in the new Act and is pleased to hear that the advice provided by members has been valuable in developing the Bill. As a voice for older people, the Council looks forward to contributing to further consultation opportunities during the parliamentary process.

Utilisation of After-Hours Primary Care Services – Council shared their views on proposed changes to after-hours primary care policies and programs, following a review of these services. Members shared various views based on their experiences and information from their networks. A key focus is older people at home needing after-hours primary care, whether from GPs or nurse practitioners, including access to medication and pain relief. Council advised after hours primary care services in rural and regional areas were a significant challenge and noted early intervention is cost-effective in the long run. They discussed opportunities for providing after hours primary care services including the use of various technology, although there is a need to build older peoples capacity to use IT systems and access to be able to introduce online solutions. Council also suggested other options such strengthening the use of My Health Record, increasing the use of nurse practitioners, and an expansion of urgent care centres and locality-based triage systems.

Support at Home – First Nations Pathways – Council discussed the importance of genuine partnerships with First Nations providers, people, and communities to design a trial pathway for funding models for Support at Home for First Nations peoples. The aim of the trial is to test a funding model that will reduce access barriers and ensure older First Nations people can obtain in-home aged care services according to their needs. Members see benefits in a grants model that allows for engaging culturally trained and competent staff to meet the changing needs of individuals. This may allow greater flexibility to maintain community connections, develop staff cultural competence, provide nutritionally appropriate food, and trial different approaches.

Events and Engagements - Council members continue to engage with their networks and seek feedback on aged care reforms. Council members shared themes they been hearing from the community. Without doubt, long waiting times for both home care packages and discharge from hospital to residential aged care continue to be of major concern within the community. In addition, there are often challenges in finding service providers and trained staff for packages and CHSP, especially in rural and regional areas. This is leaving people without access to services. Members have been presenting the Council's work at sector conferences and similar events, where there is a keen interest in the Council's role as a voice for older people. Members have also been visiting residential aged care facilities around the country. These visits enable Council members to engage in conversations with aged care residents about their experiences living in residential aged care and increase awareness of the aged care reforms.