



# National Aged Care Advisory Council

## Meeting Communique – 29 January 2025

### **Council Introductions and Strategic Vision**

Council convened its first meeting of the year on 29 January 2025, welcoming five new members, including Professor Sue Gordon as the new Chair. Members expressed their shared commitment to providing independent, expert advice to the Minister for Aged Care, leveraging diverse sector expertise to advance meaningful reform. Council reflected on significant achievements to date, particularly the passage of the new Aged Care Act 2024, and look forward to identifying future opportunities for progress.

### **Aged Care Reform and Implementation Priorities**

Council welcomed the establishment of the Aged Care Transition Taskforce to provide oversight and stewardship of the reforms to the aged care system included in the new Aged Care Act 2024, ahead of its commencement on 1 July 2025.

Members noted the importance of identifying innovative opportunities, fostering cultural change, and addressing the relational imperatives of aged care reform for older people.

NACAC looks forward to collaborating closely with the Aged Care Transition Taskforce and the Council of Elders to ensure the best outcomes for older Australians, addressing emerging issues and offering evidence-based solutions.

### **Aged Care Act 2024**

Council discussed the progress of legislative reform. Members expressed support for the early release of upcoming tranches of the Rules and stressed the importance of clear, accessible information, tailored to specific audiences. Council noted the Aged Care Transition Taskforce's ongoing work specifically in this area.

### **Market and Workforce**

Council welcomed updates on workforce initiatives that have contributed to a significant increase (25%) in aged care staff numbers between 2020 and 2023, as well as improvements in worker satisfaction. Members highlighted the critical role of primary care in remote areas and discussed leveraging these services to strengthen the aged care system. Council discussed a broad range of ideas to strengthen workforce training in the aged care sector.

### **Fees and Contributions**

Council discussed the complexities of changes to fees and contributions and highlighted the need for careful monitoring of the new charging framework, particularly the boundaries of 'clinical care' and the application of hardship provisions. Council anticipates the finalisation of the service list to provide greater clarity on what contributions will and will not cover.

### **Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner**

Council was briefed by the Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner and acknowledged the value of the Commissioner's role and independence in driving meaningful reforms. Members look forward to the release of her upcoming report,

*Transforming Aged Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*, which includes examples of culturally safe and appropriate care models.

### **Residential Care Overview**

Council received a comprehensive briefing on residential aged care operations, including insights on transitioning to payment in arrears. Members discussed some emerging, unintended complexities related to care minutes funding.

### **Support at Home Program**

Council discussed the implementation of the Support at Home program and welcomed information about a voluntary survey in February to assist in establishing expected pricing from 1 July 2025. Members emphasised the importance of communications for all audiences in the sector.