



National Aged Care Advisory Council

Meeting Communique – 11 June 2025

Minister Visit

Council congratulated the Hon. Sam Rae MP, Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, welcomed the alignment of the two portfolios, and expressed interest in ongoing collaboration. Members also acknowledged the deferral of the new Aged Care Act from 1 July 2025 to 1 November 2025 and recognised the associated implementation challenges.

Aged Care Reform Priorities

Council agreed the consensus feedback from the sector about deferral of the new Aged Care Act is positive, with members acknowledging the benefits of postponement outweigh any drawbacks. While some providers are ready for the transition, others require more time, and the delay is expected to result in improved outcomes for both older people and service providers. Council also discussed the new Ministry and the inclusion of disability and the potential for stronger connections across the care economy. Internally, the Department has significant work to complete in collaboration with Services Australia and care providers to ensure the new systems are fully prepared. This additional time will allow for more thorough testing and refinement before the systems go live.

Fees and Contributions

Council welcomed proposed refinements to the Higher Everyday Living Fee framework, noting improvements in clarity, bundling rules, and agreement separation.

Council advised the need to preserve consumer choice and ensure informed consent—particularly for vulnerable residents. Council emphasised the importance of provider education and clear, accessible agreements to support effective implementation. Council is also concerned about the timing and process for hardship provisions.

Linking Care Minutes to Funding Measure

Council acknowledged the care minute supplement's goal of aligning funding with care delivery and noted concerns raised by some providers about penalising providers slightly under target. Members opposed adding further tolerance, warning it could encourage under-delivery. Instead, they recommended refining the supplement to reward full or above-target care delivery, while maintaining quality and person-centred care. Council also welcomed further discussions on outcome-based incentives, innovation, workforce, and training.

Reform Implementation Overview

Council welcomed the extended role and revised timelines of the Aged Care Transition Taskforce following the 1 November 2025 implementation date. Members supported continued communication and training efforts to ensure sector readiness, and emphasised the need for timely, high-quality resources to avoid information overload for providers, care partners, and older people.

Support at Home Program

Council noted ongoing confusion in the sector around the inclusion of the Commonwealth Home Support Program under the new Aged Care Act from 1 November 2025. Members highlighted the need for clearer, simplified information on service agreements, fees, and service changes, and suggested exploring alternative engagement methods. Council also acknowledged the need to strengthen choice and control and expressed willingness to collaborate with the Department to support positive outcomes.

National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines

Council thanked the Department for promoting voluntary adoption of the National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines and stressed the importance of considering care practices when evaluating the effectiveness of design changes within residential aged care settings. Members discussed and recommended further review of the draft supplementary guidance for culturally safe design for First Nations people to ensure it supports safe, quality care, meets regulatory requirements, is functional for providers and staff, and is applicable to both new builds and refurbishments.

The registered supporter role and supported decision-making

Council acknowledged the Department's focus on Supported Decision Making (SDM) as central to the new rights-based Aged Care Act, highlighting the cultural shift toward reinforcing older people's autonomy. They noted the complexity of the interaction of Commonwealth and state legislation and recommended clear role delineation between supporters and decision-makers, supported by targeted education and fit-for-purpose resources. Council also emphasised the need for ongoing monitoring to identify barriers and best practices in embedding SDM across the sector.