



Council of Elders

Meeting Communique – 13 August 2025

Aged Care Reform and Implementation Priorities and the Aged Care Act 2024

Council discussed preparations for the new Aged Care Act which comes into effect on 1 November 2025. Members were keen to understand how this change will support the access and transfer of information across the aged care system, recognising the importance of connectivity and digital literacy to improve efficiency.

Council emphasised the need for assessors and providers to be trained to apply good judgement and respond appropriately to the individual in front of them, rather than relying on a standard digital process. Members acknowledged the move to single assessments has streamlined the process, noting the increase in phone-based assessments may not always meet participants' need as well as face-to-face interactions. Members recognise the value of improved digital systems and emphasised these should be seen as supplementary options rather than replacements for face-to-face services. Many older people continue to rely on personal interactions to have their needs met.

Council discussed assessment outcomes and the need for participants to be given the opportunity to review their assessments for accuracy before the information is finalised.

Commonwealth Home Support Program

Council discussed the work being undertaken to ensure people receiving CHSP services who have not yet had an aged care assessment are supported before the new Act commences. Council recognised this as a challenge and will look to work with the Department on possible solutions. Members also raised the importance of social support services for older people, their broader interest in the design of CHSP, and the future funding of the program.

Support at Home

Council welcomed the release of the Service Agreement template and guidance, however, members noted that many remain confused about the new arrangements beginning

1 November 2025. Members noted the transition is complex and should not be underestimated. Council raised concerns about the requirements for participants to give 48 hours' notice to providers when there is a change in services, or they risk being charged. Members sought clarity around equipment and assistive technology purchases and the need to improve transport options, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Communications and Engagement update

Council members have continued to take part in a wide range of activities, attending more than 30 sector and community events in the first half of this year. Engagements have

included webinars, podcasts, radio interviews, residential aged care visits and a variety of local events.

Members are hearing directly from older Australians and bringing those voices to the policy areas in the Department. M continue to hear concerns within the community about older people in hospital who are medically fit for discharge who are unable to access residential aged care or respite services. This may be due to structural or systemic issues, including provider decision making and availability of concessional places. Members look forward to discussing this issue further with the Department in the future.

The next meeting of the Council of Elders will be held on 10 and 11 September 2025.