

Aged Care Transition Taskforce – Final summary

16 February 2026

The Aged Care Transition Taskforce (Transition Taskforce) had its final meeting on 16 February 2026. Members took the opportunity to reflect on key achievements since November 2024 when the Transition Taskforce was established to work with and support the aged care sector through the transition to the *Aged Care Act 2024* (the Act).

The Transition Taskforce has supported implementation by providing advice, identifying and troubleshooting issues and collaborating on solutions. Consistent with the Terms of Reference, the Transition Taskforce's focus was on implementation, it was not a decision-making forum, and it was not within scope to revisit decisions of Government. Members worked collaboratively using their networks from a cross section of the aged care sector to act as a conduit to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the Department) and the Minister for Aged Care and Seniors.

The Transition Taskforce brought together experts in older people, consumer advocacy, workforce representation, dementia, service delivery, First Nations people, regulation, education and training, data and digital and primary and clinical care. Members worked with the Department, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (the Commission), and Services Australia collegiately and constructively, identifying implementation risks, working through issues and resolving these where possible. Outside the formal meetings, members participated in three working groups that regularly reported to the Transition Taskforce on digital implementation, care management, and education and training.

The Transition Taskforce met a total of 23 times (17 formal meetings and 6 targeted online meetings) to oversee five implementation and transition streams as set out in its Terms of Reference:

Implementing the drafted Rules and other subordinate legislation

Members considered the consultation process and key engagement dates for the Aged Care Rules including useful approaches to collect and summarise feedback and the criticality of timing for the release of the Rules. Members advised on the supporting explanatory documents for funding arrangements, including for existing care recipients. Members discussed obligations for registered providers, worker screening and the role of the state and territory governments, entry to the aged care system and reviewable decisions including through a question-and-answer panel session with the Department. Members also advised on the new aged care framework and advised on the importance of publishing clear guidance, particularly around timelines. Members engaged with the Department's risk assessment and contingency planning and approaches to the management of issues once the Act, and Support at Home (SaH) program had commenced.

Communication and change management

Members played a key role in finalising the ‘Sector Change Plan’ (for the communication, engagement, guidance and training activities planned) to support older people and the sector to transition to the Act. Members considered readiness activities and provided detailed feedback including on the need for clarity around cultural change, the Statement of Rights and right to culturally safe care, and capturing the impact and rationale for changes.

Members actively assisted in developing the Communication Strategy to support the aged care reforms, emphasising the importance of it being fit for purpose and culturally appropriate. Members encouraged the use of active channels, to engage and ensure that information effectively reached targeted groups, including fully utilising various stakeholder bases, and leveraging older people networks.

Members highlighted the need for a tailored approach and continued engagement to meet the unique needs of First Nations people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with dementia, and those people living and working in rural, regional and remote areas, including through First Nations providers and workers. Members suggested communication and change management mechanisms to support pre and post implementation and advised on work to manage and mitigate service disruption through the transition process.

The Transition Taskforce regularly discussed readiness activities of the Commission, Services Australia and the Department, and advised on activities and materials to reduce pressure and support the sector (including the Provider Operational Readiness – Priority Actions List) and focus on older people and their families. Members actively assisted with the development of the Aged Care Act Roadmap.

Members discussed the Department’s progress on risk assessment and contingency planning and considered approaches to the management of issues following commencement of the Act and Support at Home program.

Education and training

Members assisted with the development of the Department’s Education and Training Plan, and the suite of education and training resources available for providers and workers, including training plan guidance, program manuals, transition guides, fact sheets, scenarios, case studies, training modules, webinars and frequently asked questions.

Members emphasised the central role of the aged care workforce and the importance of training and timing the training modules for maximum uptake. Members supported the Minister’s open letter to providers on their training obligations and expectations. Members support the training framework for providers, including guidance for providers and workers.

Members advised on the Commission's education and engagement approach to ensure that it succeeds in promoting understanding of the regulatory system, including protections for older people and accessing the complaints framework.

Members emphasised the importance of fit for purpose education and training and the need for ongoing training and monitoring of uptake and effectiveness.

Funding and fee structure

Members actively engaged in discussions with the Department on the implementation of the funding and fees structure of the SaH program, the impact of means testing and sequencing options, service agreements, bad debt and hardship provisions, and payments and claims processes. Members advised on the 'no worse off' principle and grandparenting arrangements, emphasising the importance of ensuring older people had clarity around the individual impact of changes.

Members considered and advised on the proposed implementation and operation of the new Higher Everyday Living Fee arrangements. In relation to hardship evidence requirements, members acknowledged the steps the Department and Services Australia had taken to make the application more intuitive for older people, to improve the timeliness of the process and to provide more clarity around the process for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Members discussed implementation impacts particularly on smaller, more isolated providers, and activities underway to support transition for both providers and consumers of services in thin markets and for diverse groups.

Data and digital

Members considered options to assist and support the full cross-section of providers in the context of the digital maturity of the sector to transition. Members provided feedback on the proposed data and digital roadmap including critical readiness activities, strategies to best communicate system requirements and implementation timeframes.

Members discussed the staged digital implementation and the provider digital readiness checklist to help providers prioritise key digital activities.

Members considered and advised on Service Australia's work with providers in an ICT test environment, and supports available for providers to help with system readiness.

Conclusion

The Transition Taskforce made significant contributions to the aged care reforms in:

- effectively monitoring and evaluating progress of aged care reform projects and initiatives

- identifying and escalating a wide range of issues that were likely to impact reform implementation and working through solutions, and
- the provision of high-level oversight of risk management activities including identification of where risk could be managed more effectively.

In closing out the Transition Taskforce at the final meeting on 16 February 2026, members shared their optimism for the new rights-based Act with older people at the centre of the system, and acknowledged the productive relationship between members and Government through the life of the forum. Members also recognised that the sector is at the beginning of the cultural change journey. Members acknowledged the scale and complexity of the reforms and encouraged the Department to continue to monitor trends and evidence.

Members also acknowledged the continuing roles of the Council of Elders and the National Aged Care Advisory Council particularly in acting as a conduit from the sector, past the conclusion of the Transition Taskforce.



Members at the final meeting of the Transition Taskforce on 16 February 2026 with the Hon Sam Rae MP, Minister for Aged Care and Seniors.

Membership

Anne Burgess AM	Chair
	Deputy Chair
Sonja Stewart	Deputy Secretary, Ageing and Aged Care Group, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
Liz Hefren-Webb	Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner
Professor Tanya Buchanan	Chief Executive Officer, Dementia Australia
Annie Butler	Federal Secretary, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation
Professor Jody Currie	Professor of Practice, Queensland University of Technology
Dr Paresh Dawda	General Practitioner, Principal and Director Prestantia Health and Next Practice
Tim Dymond	Senior Policy Analyst, United Workers Union
Craig Gear OAM	Chief Executive Officer, Older Persons Advocacy Network
Amanda Hawton	General Manager, Home Health, Australian Unity
Emma Hossack	Chief Executive Officer, Medical Software Industry Association
Andrea Kelly	Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
Claerwen Little	Former National Director, UnitingCare Australia
Deidre McGill	Chief Operating Officer Home & Community Support, Bolton Clarke
Simon Miller	Chief Executive Officer, Anglicare
Natalie Molloy	Chief Clinical Officer, Warrigal
Sonya Smart	Chief Operating Officer, VMCH (August 2025 to February 2026)

Patricia Sparrow	Chief Executive Officer, COTA Australia
Tom Symondson	Chief Executive Officer, Ageing Australia
Stephen Teulan	Deputy Chair and Non-Executive Director, Catholic Health Australia (November 2024 – June 2025)
Lloyd Williams	National Secretary, Health Services Union