



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Allied Health Industry Reference Group Meeting Summary Meeting No. 17, Tuesday, 3 March 2026

On 3 March 2026, the Australian Government Chief Allied Health Officer (CAHO), Anita Hobson-Powell chaired the 17th meeting of the Allied Health Industry Reference Group (AHIRG) meeting via Teams.

Agenda item 1: Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

- The CAHO welcomed attendees.

Agenda item 2: Meeting business

- Nil Conflicts of Interest declared.
- The CAHO provided a status update on previous actions.

Agenda item 3: CAHO update

- Acknowledgement of movement and uncertainty in sector, particularly regarding changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Office of CAHO and Allied Health Section can direct queries to the relevant team.
- The CAHO acknowledged the ongoing Commonwealth Prac Payment advocacy for allied health inclusion.
- The CAHO advised that the Office of the CAHO now sits with the Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office in the Health Professions Advisory Division, Systems Strategy Group following a recent department restructure.

Agenda item 4: Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program (ACNNP)

- The Chronic Conditions and Screening Division (CCSD) presented on the Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program.
 - The ACNNP aims to improve access to high quality, culturally safe care for anyone impacted by cancer, regardless of where they live or the type of cancer. Services are free for anyone to access and do not require a doctor's referral.
 - More information about the Program and funded organisations is available at [Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program | Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing](#).
 - The Nous Group and Queensland University of Technology (QUT) have been engaged by the Department to conduct an independent evaluation of the ACNNP and the closely related Cancer Patient Support Program. The evaluation commenced October 2024 and will conclude June 2027.
- Members discussed:
 - The availability of communications assets to assist with creating awareness of the program, including those aimed at First Nations peoples. It was noted that some organisations are tailoring resources and materials to First Nations peoples and other communities.

- Interested stakeholders can request to be signed up to the quarterly *Australian Cancer Nursing and Navigation Program* newsletter to be kept informed about the progress of the program, or if they have any questions – please email ACNNP@health.gov.au

Agenda item 5: Support at Home- Implementation update and allied health engagement

- Aged Care Reform Implementation Division (RID) presented an update on the implementation of the Support at Home program.
 - The Support at Home program commenced on 1 November 2025.
 - The allied health sector has played a key role in shaping the final program design, particularly in embedding a stronger focus on wellness, enablement, restorative care and multidisciplinary practice.
 - Key stakeholders considered the launch an overall success, however there are some operational and system issues that are being worked through with peaks, providers and practitioners.
 - Specific issues raised for allied health included travel time and its affect on pricing, uncertainty around support for multidisciplinary care, increased administrative burden under the new Aged Care Act and assessment of eligible allied health services.
 - RID is working with the CAHO to develop some case studies to illustrate working as a multidisciplinary team within the Support at Home program.
- Members discussed:
 - Addressing issues of the program – program evaluation has commenced and is anticipated to be completed in 2 years and stakeholder consultation around service lists eligibility.
 - Training for service providers and independent assessors in assessing allied health needs in a standardised way in the Support at Home program.
 - How multidisciplinary teams will be linked up in the digital environment for information sharing.
 - Importance of considering workforce limitations and program update and reduced access as a result in the rural and remote context, as well as program promotion in these areas.
- The CAHO will continue to engage with the policy team to progress future work.

Agenda item 6: Improving Allied Health Access for Aged Care Providers/Older Australians Under the New Aged Care Act 2024 and Emerging Workforce and Commissioning Reforms

- Aged Service Delivery Division provided an overview of the role of the State Manager of ACT NSW and led a discussion on key reform drivers and the intersection with allied health.
 - The branch works closely with aged care providers, Local Hospital Districts, PHNs and First Nations providers on a range of areas, including the implementation of the New Aged Care Act and delayed discharge from hospital of older people.
- Members discussed:
 - The challenges of policy governance and what would help support changes.
 - The impact the new aged care integrated assessment tool and how associated funding will drive workforce markets.
 - Increased data collection from residential aged care homes on service delivery.

Agenda item 7: Overview of today’s meeting, confirmation of actions and closing remarks

- Actions arising from this meeting were confirmed.