



Council of Elders

Meeting Communique – 17-18 June 2026

The Council of Elders (Council) met to discuss key aged care reform priorities and provide advice on issues affecting older people, families, carers and the aged care sector. The Council welcomed the Hon Sam Rae, Minister for Aged Care and Seniors, and appreciated the opportunity to hear about recent Government decisions on personal care, assessment processes and the Integrated Assessment Tool. Members noted that these decisions respond to issues previously raised by the Council.

Members emphasised the importance of clear, timely and accessible communication as reforms are implemented, including information for older people, families, carers and providers. The Council noted that reform success should be measured by whether older people experience the aged care system as clear, responsive, affordable and easy to navigate.

The Council discussed implementation priorities for the Commonwealth Home Support Program, Support at Home and hospital discharge arrangements. Members highlighted the need to monitor wait times, service availability and provider system issues, and supported nationally consistent approaches for older people waiting in hospital for aged care supports.

Members highlighted the importance of maintaining service continuity in thin markets, particularly in rural, regional and remote areas and for diverse communities. The Council noted the need for early identification of service risks, practical support for providers, and locally and culturally appropriate responses.

The Council strongly supported the move to a rights-based Aged Care Act and emphasised that rights must be practical, easy to understand and supported by accessible pathways to advocacy and complaints. Members also discussed improvements to My Aged Care and the need for simpler, more consistent registered supporter processes.

The Council considered residential care and the Higher Everyday Living Fee, noting the importance of clear information for residents and families, strong baseline quality care, safeguards against pressure to purchase additional services, and ongoing monitoring of consumer impacts. Members also noted that Wi-Fi should be considered a standard service because of its role in supporting connection, information access and telehealth.

Members considered ageing well as a broader cross-government and community priority. The Council highlighted the importance of challenging ageism, recognising the contribution of older people, and addressing risks such as social isolation, scams, housing insecurity, financial pressures, health care access and digital exclusion.

The Council discussed obligations for associated providers under the Aged Care Act 2024 and noted the need for practical solutions that support quality and safety while reducing unnecessary administrative burden. Members supported clearer and simpler requirements, reduced duplication, and testing future guidance with small providers and community-controlled organisations.

The Council will continue to provide advice to Government on aged care reform implementation, service access, affordability, consumer protections and support for diverse needs. Future discussions will focus on practical improvements that support clear, responsive, safe and person-centred aged care.

The next Council of Elders meeting will be held on 5-6 August 2026.