

# National Aged Care Advisory Council – Communiqué – 9 December 2021

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The inaugural meeting of the National Aged Care Advisory Council took place on 9 December 2021.

The Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Greg Hunt MP and the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck, addressed the meeting, thanking Members for their willingness to be a part of the National Aged Care Advisory Council (Advisory Council).

The Ministers reinforced the significant role members will have in the implementation of the aged care reforms. They highlighted that the Royal Commission provides a genuine opportunity to reform the sector and that reforms must focus on progressive change and rebuilding confidence amongst the community and the aged care sector.

Ministers discussed the need for a continuum of care from the first point of home care to clinical care being provided in residential settings, with quality systems fundamental in ensuring quality care.

Ministers raised the importance of maintaining confidence in the sector and acknowledging that while there are challenges, we must not lose sight of what the sector has achieved through such a challenging period.

There was strong sentiment from all members regarding the honour it is to be a part of such a significant part of the reform to the aged care system.

Each member highlighted priority issues to inform the forward workplan. These include:

- Confidence – building confidence in people receiving care, in the workforce, and in the sector itself, whilst maintaining the government’s focus on the ageing members of our society, and ensuring the Aged Care portfolio continues to remain in Cabinet.
- Appropriate care – ensuring that senior Australians have a voice and are engaged in partnership wherever possible, are getting care that is appropriate to their needs and consistent with their wishes. That we ensure people are aware of the services available to them.
- Home care – supporting senior Australians to remain at home consistent with their wishes including additional personal care workers, GP visits, allied health services, palliative care services and access to respite.
- Workforce – the importance of national coordination, implementation and delivery of consistent, flexible and quality training for workers in the sector. Ensure all workers in the Aged Care Sector are valued and increased effort is made to attract, train and sustain this vital workforce.

- Access to services for vulnerable groups – ensuring not only that services are available but that they are accessible and delivered in a culturally appropriate manner.
- Greater access to Culturally Safe services for First Nations Peoples of this Country.
- Quality of care – ensuring safety, kindness and consumer choice, including acceptance of risk and dignity is prioritised.
- Compliance and quality assurance – ensuring that service providers understand and meet quality standards, noting nutritional standards have been recognised by the Royal Commission as an essential component of quality.
- Systems integration – building pathways and ensuring access to models of care that meet individual needs, with a focus on quality of life including cultural values and religious beliefs, physical needs, cognitive and communication needs, disabilities, social and emotional needs, and the value of integrating aged care services with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services.
- Technology and data – The need for customer-focussed easy to use systems with meaningful real time data insights to support service delivery. Enable access to technology for all recipients of aged care to allow them to continue to meaningfully engage with activities and communities that are important to them. It was noted that adding a navigator to a complex system is not simplifying, we need to make the system simple.
- Funding and finance – acknowledging the impact of cognitive decline as well as physical decline in aged care consumers and the impacts on funding and service delivery.
- Innovation – demonstrating best practice and encouraging and enabling innovation in service delivery to be recognised and rewarded.
- Implementation – recognition of the substantial transformative change required to support key reforms and the importance of sequencing and managing the rollout with a clear architecture that identifies the desired outcomes.
- Communication – Clear, concise, timely, consistent communication by the Government, the Quality and Safety Commission and the Advisory Council is essential to ensure there is widespread community awareness of the reforms and challenges in aged care. It is important to highlight the successes and to make certain communication is targeted to all people who use the aged care system regardless of their geographic, cultural, economic or personal circumstances.
- Preventative measures – ensuring Australians are ageing well and successfully to keep them in their preferred place of residence for as long as possible.
- Effective governance – ensuring that new models of care have appropriate levels of governance and accountability and using that governance to instil high quality care.

Members are looking forward to ensuring the aged care reforms meet the needs and expectations of senior Australians, their families and carers and the Australian community.

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for Thursday, 20 January 2022.