

The Council of Elders

A voice for older Australians in the aged care reforms and ageing generally

Communiqué – 21 and 22 July 2022

The July meeting of the Council of Elders (the Council) provided an opportunity for the Council to meet with the Minister for Aged Care, the Hon Anika Wells MP, and discuss priority issues associated with key aged care reforms.

Minister Wells thanked the Council for the thoughtful and solutions-based advice that was recently provided in relation to implementing the Government's key aged care reform election commitments.

Minister Wells spoke to the two Bills being presented in the first week of the Parliament, the [Aged Care Amendment \(Implementing Care Reform\) Bill 2022](#) and the [Aged Care and Other Legislation Amendment \(Royal Commission Response\) Bill 2022](#). Members expressed their support for the Bills including the importance of their timely passage to enable critical reforms to proceed.

The Council considered the development and design of the approach to Star Ratings and discussed a range of issues including the data collected, the stability and validity of the Star Ratings, the inclusion of education/qualifications of staff, the ability of consumers to provide time relevant feedback, unintended or unwanted consequences, as well as how information will be shared with carers and consumers who are unable to access the internet. Members emphasised the importance of real-time data that is accurate and clear and discussed next steps relating to implementation.

The proposed approach to public consultation on the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards was considered by the Council. The Department sought advice from the Council on ways to engage and consult with older Australians to help obtain their insights for inclusion in the review of the Standards. Members suggested the Department's awareness campaign might include online demonstrations at morning teas in First Nations and CALD communities; the use of community radio as a good medium for sharing information with older Australians, particularly those in culturally diverse communities; and that there may also be opportunities for face-to-face delivery at local community meetings and in community group sessions, for example, libraries. The Council agreed on the importance of early and clear messaging to help people participate in the consultation.

The Council considered and provided advice on the draft Strategic Framework for the Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care and the proposed model for a complaints management function. Members discussed the importance of considering the issues of advocacy and awareness, guardianship, duplication and timeliness, and considerations for CALD and dementia clients with regard to reporting and complaint management.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on 19 August 2022.