



National Aged Care Advisory Council

Communique – 25 August 2022

At the August 2022 meeting of the National Aged Care Advisory Council, Members considered a broad range of aged care reform priorities. Members focused on the importance of being forward-looking to the next wave of aged care reforms to encourage innovation and optimise productivity.

The Advisory Council acknowledges and supports the intent of the reforms the Government is working to achieve. Members noted the importance of delivering quality care outcomes while trying to minimise the risk of unintended consequences.

Consultation demonstrates the proposed new *home care model* needs more flexibility. The department is undertaking further work on options for a preferred model. Members agreed transparency and more consumer choice is important. They also discussed how to factor these features into the preferred model. Some suggestions included access to data and digital innovation. Members also voiced the importance of continuity of service, especially when package levels change.

The Advisory Council provided advice on the development of operational policy to support the 24/7 Registered Nurse requirement. They considered workforce pressures, the situation of rural and remote providers, and nurse-patient ratios. Members also raised the importance of effective, high-quality IT infrastructure to facilitate telehealth consultations. Members also considered feasible options and suitable short-term alternatives to the requirement for 24/7 Registered Nursing.

Members agreed the aged care provider census is an important part of understanding the workforce. They considered the proposed approach and options for the next census. They emphasised the importance of including questions on development and training. These types of questions may provide a better understanding of workforce retention. Members also suggested alternative approaches be investigated to capture workforce data, such as the use of more innovative technology.

The Advisory Council acknowledged the importance of keeping up the momentum in progressing the new Aged Care Act. They noted the critical role the new Act will play in the reforms. The Advisory Council also provided advice on the development of the independent Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care. Members welcomed the development of the Inspector-General role. The Inspector-General has potential to monitor aged care reform, as well as identify and provide solutions to systemic issues.

The Advisory Council acknowledged the series of roundtable discussions relating to jobs and skill challenges, and the importance of considering the outcomes of the upcoming Jobs and Skills summit at the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 13 October 2022.