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IN THIS ISSUE

- ▶ How to prepare for upcoming legislative changes
- ▶ The competitive advantage for your retirement village
- ▶ Congratulations to our ACCPA award winners 2024
- ▶ Innovative residential care programs support community integration
- ▶ Award-winning aged care design in Perth and the Adelaide Hills
- ▶ Technology solutions for aged care

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The official magazine of

ACCPA
Aged & Community Care Providers Association

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St Catherine's



Adrian, CEO

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Catherine, Nursing Dir. Aged Care

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David, CEO

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Carrie, CEO

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respect



Kellie, Care Manager

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to HG for their outstanding assistance at Respect. HG simplified complex situations, guided me through industry standards.

Warrigal



Navjeet, Clinical Care Manager

You are doing great job !! Your clinical expertise & sound knowledge has helped our team to grow professionally.

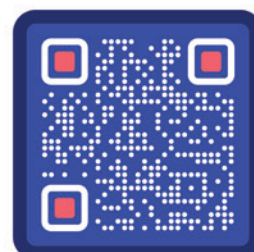
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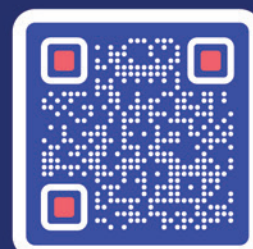
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to our spring 2024 issue of *Aged Care Today* – the official magazine of the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA).

This a watershed moment for aged care, with bipartisan support announced for a new Aged Care Act and a clear response to the Aged Care Taskforce Report.

The opportunity to create a world-class aged care system is now within our reach, and the scope of content in our magazine becomes even more important, because it's through enhancements in care practices and service delivery, more person-centred programming in residential care, a strengthened workforce, new technologies and more strategic financial planning that providers can offer excellence in services.

The two new award-winning builds showcased in this issue - from ACCPA members Curtin Heritage Living in Western Australia Clayton Church Homes in South Australia - are testament to what's possible.

Linda Baracioli, Editor

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Cover shot:
(L-R) The Argyle Court Re-Cycle bikes program team members
Maintenance Officer
Robbie, resident David,
Social Support Assistant
Gayle and resident Geoff.
(See story on page 48.)

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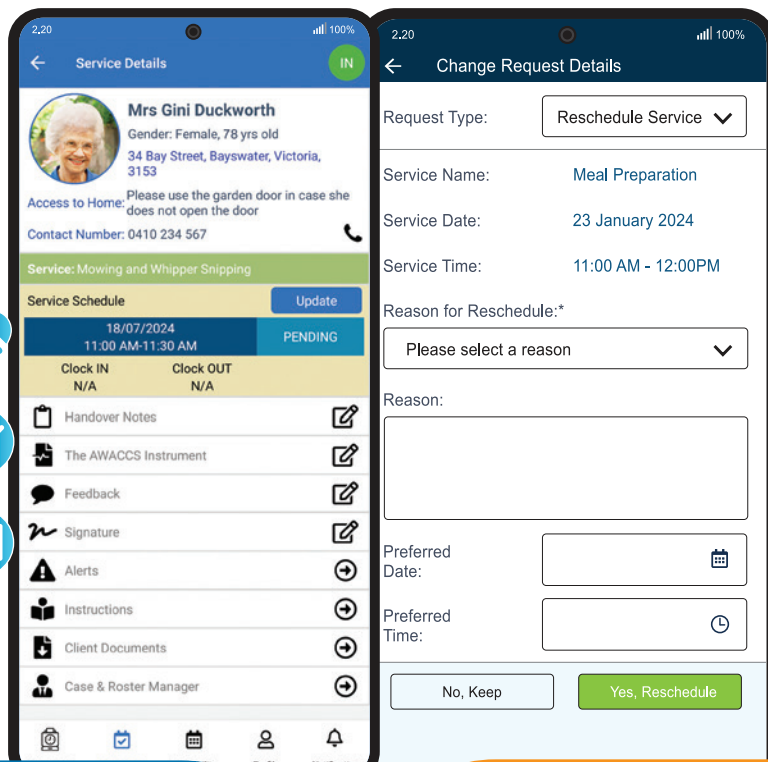
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ACCPA getting on with the job

Fostering and celebrating success in aged care



As the sector stands at a pivotal political crossroad, the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) and aged care providers are getting on with the job of reform and celebrating our sector's heart and soul.

Aged Care Employee Day, on 7 August, presented a special occasion to honour the unsung heroes of aged and community care and to reflect on the future direction of the sector.

Members once again threw their support behind the day by attending ACCPA events, holding their own celebrations and showing appreciation by sharing videos and photographs to social channels using the #ThanksforCaring hashtag.

This important annual event not only boosts morale but also reinforces the importance of aged and community care roles.

Focusing on a culture of respect and appreciation and sharing our collective achievements with the wider community is key to ensuring aged care workers feel valued and motivated.

Our marketing and communications team has been busy on many fronts including leading Aged Care Employee Day, which for the first time included the ACCPA Excellence Awards.

Congratulations to the 15 category winners who were among 48 finalists for the ACCPA Excellence Awards. I understand the judging panels had a difficult time choosing the winners from the many high quality and deserving nominations.

These winners were selected from more than 460 nominations received as part of our industry recognition program, 'You are ACE!'.

The Excellence Awards celebrated individuals, teams, and organisations that have been going above and beyond in achieving excellence in aged care.

It has been heartwarming to see ACCPA state managers presenting certificates to proud finalists across the country and reading about their wonderful stories.

The innovation of finalists and winners has highlighted their dedication and exceptional contributions.

It is through their hard work and dedication that they have set a benchmark for others to follow while making a significant impact on the lives of the older Australians they serve.

ACCPA's media team has been identifying and promoting these and other good news stories about sector workers and their achievements to share with targeted media around the country.

Our stories call out ageism, while highlighting innovation and great teamwork. They are part of a renewed effort to transform and enhance the public perception of our sector through proactive storytelling.

This positive media strategy is working to balance the narrative, showcasing the compassionate care provided daily to older Australians.

From the exemplary work of aged care workers responding to a bushfire emergency to dedicated nurses at varied career stages, these good news stories have shone a positive light on our sector and the people at the heart of it.

Another important element of good news stories has been to promote aged care careers specifically in areas of key workforce shortages such as nursing and direct care workers.

As we look to the years ahead, it's important to keep acknowledging and celebrating our sector leaders and the team members who so tirelessly provide outstanding care for the people they serve.

**Dr Graeme Blackman AO FTSE FAICD, Chairman,
Aged & Community Care Providers Association
accpa.asn.au**

Bipartisan support secured for critical reform

ACCPA advocacy success



In a watershed moment, 12 September 2024 saw the introduction of the new Aged Care Act to Federal Parliament. This event, the culmination of more than a year of advocacy, debate and political negotiation, marked the passing of the most significant hurdle for the most significant reforms to aged care in a quarter of a century.

For many months we worked assiduously with all sides of politics to deliver this incredibly important outcome. Yet on more than a few occasions it seemed that the chance had slipped away only to re-emerge days or weeks later. As late as 11 September 2024, an inauspicious date to say the least, the media seemed to have called time on the bill. Yet just one day later, the deal was done and the Act was finally introduced.

So what happened? And more importantly, what changed?

The week had commenced with a blaze of publicity from ACCPA, highlighting this as the last possible opportunity to ensure an Act could be passed before the election. While negotiation between the government and opposition had been genuine and had resulted in significant improvements to the bill, we were crystal clear in our public messaging that there could be no more delay.

In multiple discussions over the weekend and into Monday with ministers, shadow ministers and advisers, I felt the



ACCPA's CEO was sought after in the media in relation to our campaign calling for bipartisan support on aged care funding reform.

government and opposition were approaching an agreement. Every question seemed to have been answered, every issue appeared to have been resolved.

And then the cracks started to show. Articles in national newspapers on Monday and Tuesday quoted opposition backbenchers breaking cover to voice concern over the impact of the reforms on older people. Following a party room meeting early on Tuesday, the news came that the opposition would be deferring further discussion on whether to support the reform until October.

We knew that an October introduction would be too late for there to be any realistic chance of parliamentary passage before the election. We had until Thursday (the last sitting day of the House until October) to get the bill introduced.

Just after dawn on Wednesday, I appeared live on Sunrise (Channel 7) followed by ABC Breakfast to make my last pitch to the wavering backbenchers. I made clear that any parliamentarian who sat on their hands and allowed this reform to fail would have to explain to their electorates why aged care homes and homecare providers were closing when there was something they could have done to stop it.

We rallied our members to urgently re-engage with the politicians they had been meeting with over the previous months. And our government relations team spent the day talking to as many MPs and Senators as possible to reiterate just how critical the reforms were and just how terrible the situation would become without them.

By the end of Wednesday, the entire sector waited with bated breath – and there was barely an unchewed fingernail remaining in the ACCPA team.

Then on Thursday morning, just after 9am, the texts and calls began. Something had shifted. An urgent Liberal party room meeting had been called. And finally, word came that the opposition had finally given its support.

The Prime Minister, Treasurer and Aged Care Minister stood up at a lunchtime press conference to make the public announcement and the relief was palpable. Soon after, the Bill was introduced.

You may wonder why we are so excited about the introduction of the Bill – after all, it isn't even law yet. But it's important to reflect on how unlikely a Bill like this even is.

A few years ago, it would have been completely unthinkable for a government to introduce a Bill calling on older Australians to contribute more towards the cost of their services where they can afford to do so.

The chances of bipartisan support for such a Bill would have been less than zero. And yet, that is what we have.

So now the complex and difficult work of getting the Bill through parliament has begun.

We've won several victories already – implementation of the Financial Sustainability Taskforce recommendations and the removal of criminal penalties being the most critical – but there is more still to do to ensure the final Act is the best it can be for older people.

But thanks to the incredible efforts of those on both the government and opposition front benches, our members, the faith-based peaks and my fantastic team, I fervently hope the greatest challenge is now behind us.

Tom Symondson
Chief Executive Officer
Aged & Community Care Providers Association

Join ACCPA - Australia's national industry association for aged care providers.

We exist to unite aged care providers under a shared vision to enhance the wellbeing of older Australians, and support our members to provide high quality care and services.

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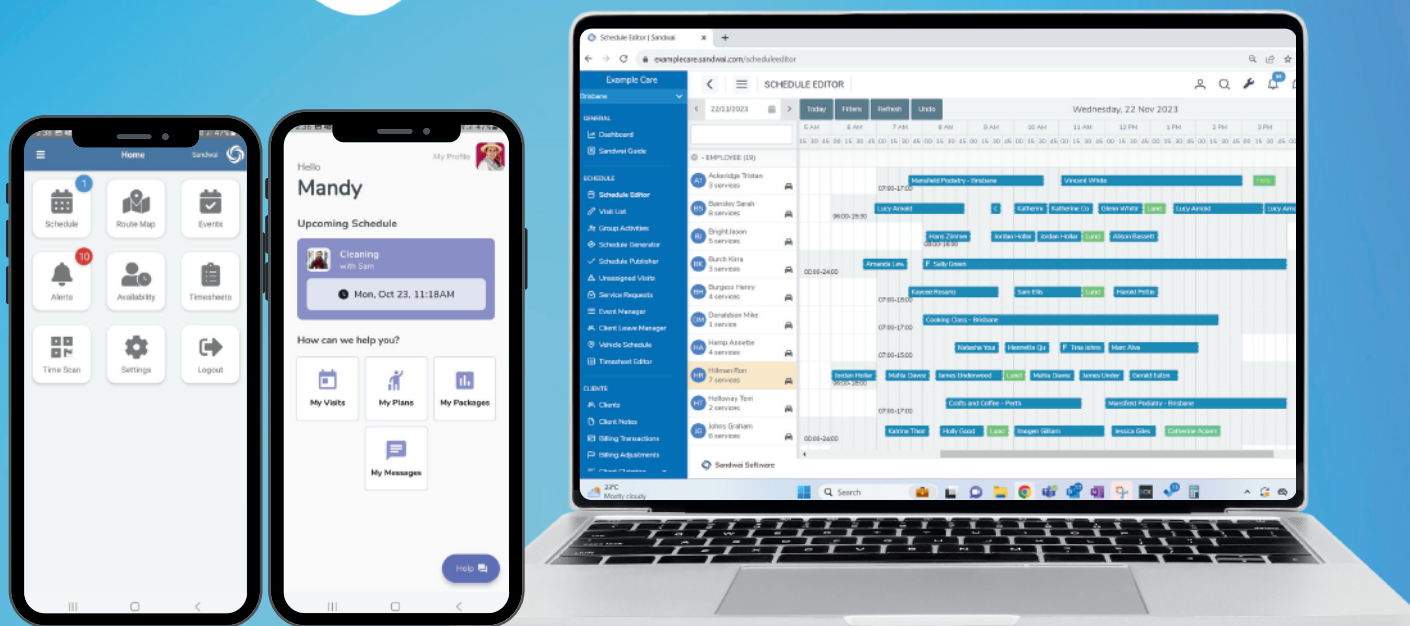
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Aged care reform is working

Restoring dignity and agency to older people

This past month has been one of the most consequential in the history of Australian aged care and I want to thank providers, staff and residents for their commitment to create better standards.

The Albanese Government has spent the past two and a half years delivering an ambitious aged care reform agenda guided by the findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

We have implemented a strategic and carefully designed series of reforms and investments, from pay rises, to 24/7 nursing, to Star Ratings and many more.

All of these reforms were designed to create foundations for the biggest change of all – a new Aged Care Act – the number one recommendation from the Royal Commission.

I am proud to say that on 12 September 2024, we introduced the new Aged Care Act to Parliament and answered the question Royal Commissioners could not agree upon: how to make aged care equitable and sustainable.

The centrepiece is our response to the Aged Care Taskforce Report.

Our response is a needs-based arrangement that makes financial sense. A system that helps more homes deliver more services for more older Australians.

This is an achievement we share with the sector. I can't wait to see the improvements in facilities and service offerings for our older Australians and see that those exciting development

plans I know many providers have sitting on shelves are finally actioned.

We pursued this path for one simple reason – we believe older people have a fundamental right for their dignity, humanity and agency to be upheld by a sustainable aged care system.

Our response to the Aged Care Taskforce Report is a \$5.6 billion package, including \$4.3 billion in a new system of home care called Support at Home.



Minister Anika Wells says her mission is to create an aged care system based on kindness, respect and dignity.

Support at Home will come into effect from 1 July 2025 and reduce wait times for in home care.

Some of the benefits of Support at Home include:

- support for 300,000 more participants in the next 10 years
- shorter average wait times from assessment to receive support
- more tailored support with eight ongoing classifications all the way up to almost \$78,000 a year
- support for home modifications with up to \$15,000 to make homes safer, and faster access to

assistive technology like walkers or wheelchairs

- the 'no worse off principle' to ensure everyone with a home care package on the national priority system, or assessed as eligible for a package as of today, will make the same contributions or lower as they would have under home care arrangements.

As recommended by the Aged Care Taskforce, our new measures include means tested contributions for new entrants, a higher maximum route price indexed over time, and the retention of a small portion of refundable accommodation deposits by providers.

From 1 July 2025 providers will retain 2 per cent of each new refundable accommodation deposit (RAD) each year for up to five years. The government will review the accommodation supplement settings over the next two years and consider phasing out RADS from 2035, subject to an independent review.

There will be no change to the contributions or RADS for those already in residential aged care before 1 July 2025.

When I became Minister for Aged Care, I vowed to do my best to ensure kindness, respect and dignity were embedded in the aged care system and I am confident the new Aged Care Act will do exactly that.

There is more to do in aged care and the mission continues. However, we have now introduced legislation that will enable our next steps to be walked with confidence.

**The Hon Anika Wells MP
Minister for Aged Care**





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Reference: 1. Ritter J, Newton C. Effectiveness and Functionality of a Female External Catheter Trial (EFFECT). Covington, GA: Bard Medical. 2017. Data on file. 2. Based on a survey of 145 respondents, 120 (n=53 users, n=55 caregivers, n=9 identified as both a user and caregiver, n=3 who did not identify whether they were a caregiver or a user) agreed that since using the PureWick™ System they typically did not have to get out of bed at night to use the bathroom. The respondents used the DryDoc™ Vacuum Station with the PureWick™ Female External Catheter (previous name of 1st generation PureWick™ Urine Collection System) and re-ordered the PureWick™ Female External Catheter at least once. 3. Based on a survey of 145 respondents, 109 (n=47 users, n=50 caregivers, n=10 identified as both a user and caregiver, n=2 who did not identify whether they were a caregiver or a user) agreed that since using the PureWick™ System they are able to sleep better at night. The respondents used the DryDoc™ Vacuum Station with the PureWick™ Female External Catheter (previous name of 1st generation PureWick™ Urine Collection System) and re-ordered the PureWick™ Female External Catheter at least once.

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A new approach to aged care regulation

Commission releases new Regulatory Strategy



The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has released its Regulatory Strategy for 2024-2025. This is a foundational document for the Commission, as it underpins every regulatory action we take.

The updated Regulatory Strategy describes how we will deliver on our commitment to protect older people, and how we hold providers and workers to account. Importantly, our Regulatory Strategy outlines what we expect from providers and workers, as well as what they can expect from us.

Embedded in the strategy is the Commission's aim to be fair, balanced and effective in all that we do. We consulted on the draft, including with the Aged & Community Care Providers Association, the Older Persons Advocacy Network, Council on the Ageing and industrial associations.

The Commission has matured considerably since our previous regulatory strategy was last updated in 2020. We have increased our capabilities and become more sophisticated in our practice, and this is reflected in the updated strategy.

We are focused on:

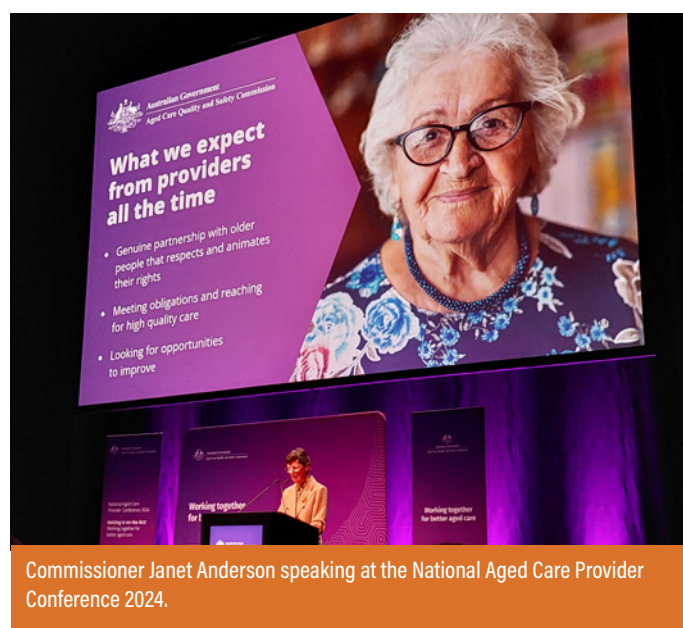
- building a culture of continuous improvement to boost stakeholders' trust and confidence in us as the regulator
- undertaking increasingly sophisticated analyses at both provider and sector level to prevent and respond to risk
- continuing to work with older people, providers and workers to improve the quality and effectiveness of our communication and education materials.

We expect providers to work in genuine partnership with older people to identify opportunities for improvement, delivering high-quality aged care that respects and dignifies older people.

When things go wrong, we expect providers to remedy the problem, restore the trust of older people and take meaningful steps to prevent the problem from happening again.

The Regulatory Strategy also explains how we will manage risk within the sector. We are constantly receiving a broad range of information about providers' and workers' performance which we use to detect risks. We call this risk surveillance.

We assess risks by analysing that information to ensure that our responses are timely, proportionate and targeted



Commissioner Janet Anderson speaking at the National Aged Care Provider Conference 2024.

to address problematic sector, provider and/or worker performance and behaviour.

Provider supervision is part of the Commission's strategy to drive the delivery of high-quality care. This involves supervising providers in a way that encourages them to address risks and lift their performance.

We use a range of regulatory approaches and tools to monitor if providers are doing the right thing, and we take compliance and enforcement actions to protect older people when we identify serious failures in care.

All providers are allocated a supervision status. Providers that are assessed to be high risk will experience a greater intensity of supervision and engagement from the Commission in response to the risks identified.

The four supervisory statuses in increasing order of risk are risk surveillance, targeted, active and heightened supervision. Providers subject to targeted, active or heightened supervision will be aware of this through the Commission's engagement with them.

We will hold providers and workers accountable for the care they provide, while supporting and incentivising them to reach for high-quality care.



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Our sector-wide and targeted education and campaigns are designed to lift provider performance by, for example, promoting best practice models for high-quality and safe care and clearly explaining provider responsibilities.

Just as providers and workers are accountable for their performance, so too is the Commission.

As an integral component of the above activities, we are working hard on further strengthening our capabilities in order to be a best-practice regulator, and to ensure that we are ready to deliver on the reforms that will be introduced with the passage of the new Aged Care Act.

We are viewing the next 12 months as a transition year – it's our runway to the anticipated new Aged Care Act – and our Regulatory Strategy 2024–2025 is focused on that. We will update our strategy annually including ahead of the introduction of the new Act.

I strongly encourage you to read our Regulatory Strategy 2024–2025, which can be downloaded here: agedcarequality.gov.au/about-us/our-regulatory-functions

Janet Anderson PSM
Commissioner
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
agedcarequality.gov.au

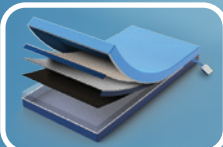


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The DREAM Project

Officially launched

The Dementia Respite Education and Mentoring Project (DREAM), a new initiative in dementia respite care, was officially launched on Tuesday 30 July 2024 by the Hon Ged Kearney MP, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care.

The highlight of the event was a conversation between Steve Wright, a family carer, with Marie Alford, Head of Dementia Support Australia. Those at the launch were moved by the account from Steve as he shared the need for and importance of quality respite care to support him while he cared for his wife, Di.

The DREAM Project has been funded by the Australian Government and developed by the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre in collaboration with Dementia Support Australia.

DREAM is free and includes personalised mentoring from Dementia Support Coaches, the opportunity to engage with peers and experts in the Community of Practice, and five new specialised educational modules on dementia respite care. We have worked with the aged care sector, consumers, and researchers to identify these five key dementia respite topics.

Module 1: Unpacking dementia and respite care

Understanding the impacts of dementia and recognising that the symptoms people experience result from changes in the brain can help you better understand the person you are providing care for. This knowledge helps you to tailor your communication, interactions, and support to better meet each person's unique needs and abilities in the respite setting.

Module 2: Navigating behaviours in respite care

As dementia progresses, changes to the brain are linked to changes in behaviour. These changes can be difficult for people with dementia, their family, carers, and communities. Transitioning to respite care can also impact behaviour. It is important to understand what changed behaviour looks like, and factors that contribute to it, in order to plan and deliver the best possible respite experience for people with dementia.

▼ Prof. James Vickers (centre) with Steve and Di Wright at the DREAM launch.





▲ Head of Dementia Support Australia, Marie Alford (right), speaking with Steve Wright.

Module 3: Relationships and communication in respite care

Recognising and supporting the relationships that have influenced a person's life is essential to providing individualised care. Experiencing respite care, whether for the first time or on a regular basis, requires a deliberate approach to developing and maintaining meaningful relationships. These relationships provide the foundation for providing quality care, bringing together the perspectives of the care staff, persons receiving care, their families, and the local community. Effective communication is the cornerstone of relationship-centred care, shaping the experiences and dynamics within the respite care setting.

Module 4: Planning for success in dementia respite care

Effective respite care planning can help create a positive experience that can be repeated in the future. Building on the foundation of knowing the person, the respite service can be planned specifically for the individual. The aim should be to provide a respite service that makes people feel safe, respected, cared for, "at home", and treated with kindness and a sense of belonging.

Module 5: Knowing the person and respite care

Knowing the person is key to creating a positive dementia respite care experience. It involves developing skills to build rapport and trust, and gaining a deep understanding of someone's needs, preferences, values, and their connections to family and community. This approach supports the delivery of high-quality culturally sensitive and person-centred care.

Each DREAM module is short and accessible, and supported by an easy-to-follow infographic that is perfect to print out and display in your workplace. You can extend your learning by accessing a range of curated additional resources or you might like to join the conversation in the Community of Practice by asking questions or sharing your experiences with your peers.

Our Australia-wide team of coaches are available now to help you build your skills and translate your learning into practice. You can do this by logging a support request and one of our nine coaches will provide you with personalised (face-to-face or virtual) coaching for you or your team.

DREAM also offers participants easy access to Equip Aged Care Learning and the Understanding Dementia MOOC. Equip Aged Care Learning provides a series of short, free, online modules on a range of topics essential for those working in the aged care sector. While the Understanding Dementia MOOC offers a more comprehensive free online course about dementia.

Join us at the 2024 ACCPA National Conference in Adelaide

We're excited to announce that the DREAM Project Team and Wicking Dementia Centre will be present at this year's conference. Come by stand #54 to meet our passionate coaches, ready to address all your respite care education needs. Don't miss this chance to connect, learn, and grow with us!

To find out more about the DREAM Project please do not hesitate to reach out at dream@utas.edu.au or visit dream.utas.edu.au to sign up and start learning.



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The changing face of aged care employment

Update on the gender undervaluation review

There have been many Fair Work Commission (FWC) matters that have been changing aged care employment conditions over the past five years or so – that’s a lot for providers to stay across and there’s more to come.

We had the four-yearly review of modern awards, the Aged Care Work Value Case (ongoing), the Annual Wage Reviews and a number of applications to vary the *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010* (with several ongoing).

There is now the FWC Gender Undervaluation - Priority Awards Review (the Review) which commenced in June this year after being foreshadowed in the Annual Wage Review decision.

The Review has the purpose to remedy potential gender undervaluation that exists in the classifications and minimum wages in five priority awards. These awards are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services Award 2020
- Children’s Services Award 2010
- Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020
- Pharmacy Industry Award 2020
- Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SCHADS Award).
- The Review can therefore impact aged care providers that employ staff under:
- Schedule B of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010
- Schedule E (disability care home care only) of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010
- the Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020 (Health Professionals in aged care).

ACCPA is proudly representing its members in the Review and has a consultative process in place with members who are impacted by it.

One of the most important matters to be addressed in the Review is the difference between the award wage rates for aged care home care employees and those for disability care home care employees.

This division of the home care employee classification occurred as a result of the implementation of Stage 2 of the Aged Care Work Value Case (the Case). This Case considered the home care employee classification in terms of aged care work and not the work of disability care employees.

This division was discussed by ACCPA and other parties during the Case, highlighting the issues that arise when a home care employee is employed to work with both aged care and NDIS clients by the same employer. ACCPA members made clear to us that this division is causing significant operational issues.

In the FWC’s Annual Wage Review 2023-2024 decision, the expert panel described the result of this division as “plainly anomalous”. They stated that based on the Stage 1 and Stage 3 decisions from the Case and the Stage 1 and 2 reports previously tabled, there is no reason to think that home care employees working in disability care have not had their award rates subjected to gender undervaluation in the same way as aged care home care employees.

As a result, they believed that this situation warranted “a priority consideration of whether the classifications and rates of pay for Home Care Employees - Disability Care under the SCHADS Award should return to alignment with those for Home Care Employees - Aged Care on the basis of the outcome determined in the Stage 3 Aged Care decision”.

In a challenge to this position however, the Australian Services Union (ASU) and other unions filed an application on 17 June 2024 to vary the SCHADS Award so that all employees who work with NDIS clients would be covered by Schedule B (the social and community services stream).

This variation would mean that those disability care home care employees currently under Schedule E would move into a different classification structure, which would potentially create greater division between the award provisions for aged care and disability care home care employees.

This application along with other important issues will be heard and determined by the FWC as part of the Review.

There is a timetable already in place with the hearing taking place in December 2024 so that the Review is concluded by the end of the Annual Wage Review 2024-25 as promised by the FWC.

This would mean that there is a likelihood that the outcome could be operational from 1 July 2025 – meaning providers may need to undertake an implementation process to comply with any new award terms and conditions.

ACCPA will keep its members informed about the Review and continue to consult on the key matters arising from the Review as it progresses.

**Claire Bailey, Head of Workplace Relations,
Aged & Community Care Providers Association**
accpa.asn.au/employment-relations;
fwc.gov.au/hearings-decisions/major-cases/gender-undervaluation-priority-awards-review

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Training without the downtime

ACCPA's bite-size bootcamps respond to workforce challenges

Anyone who has served in the military or signed up to a grueling training regime will be familiar with the term 'bootcamp' – and now aged care workers and leaders can get the same level of 'workforce fitness' from our professional development bootcamps without the downtime.

While our bootcamps won't prepare you for service or a marathon, they will deliver a jam-packed learning experience, with detailed subject knowledge, frameworks, practical strategies and tools that can be applied straight away.

Over the past two years, the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) has delivered diverse professional development opportunities to our members and the wider aged care services industry.

Through our learning and professional development initiatives, we are supporting attraction, recruitment and retention strategies and raising awareness of the diverse pathways available for sustainable employment.

Many thousands have engaged in our professional development events, programs and leadership training, bringing fresh resolve and innovative solutions to challenges.

Not just set-and-forget, we are committed to leading bravely and tapping into areas of key need in the industry.

Our professional development calendar is constantly evolving in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the Australian Government's reform agenda, as well as what aged care providers tell us they need.

We have pivoted quickly to offer new content in new ways – including online, on-demand and customised exclusive delivery – and our new bootcamp delivery option means aged care staff can receive comprehensive training in a fraction of the usual time.

Providers said they wanted a choice that delivered intensive learning quickly for their staff – so we listened.

Using specific instructional design, our bootcamps offer accessible, bite size 30-minute training sessions, with participants walking away with new insights as well as resources and a tip sheet.

The weekly online sessions build on one another progressively over a four-week period, making learning easy to integrate with day-to-day work.

With opportunities to share ideas and solutions, participants can also learn from their peers in the industry.

To date, we have developed three different bootcamps: 'Leadership', 'Workforce Retention' and 'Conversations'.

In November 2023 we delivered our first Leadership and Workforce Retention bootcamps for Victorian and Tasmanian home care providers under the Australian Government Home Care Workforce Support Program and a Conversation bootcamp for national providers of the Commonwealth Home Support Program.

Sharon Richards, Team Leader at Southern Cross Care (Tasmania) said the leadership bootcamp was well worth it.

"Sometimes training sessions can go on and on and then you lose everything that you learned at the beginning, you can't retain it all. I certainly learned things, the content was interesting, and I picked up a few things that have helped me as a leader," she said.

Now with upcoming reform in home care, we are offering two new bootcamps – 'Frontline Home Care Workers' and 'Home Care Managers' – as part of our 'Leading the Way in Home Care' suite of professional development products.

We are also working on bringing our 'No Need to Wing It' bootcamp to market, which is designed to equip aged care staff with the confidence and skills to deliver clear, concise, meaningful and

relevant information – ideal for people whose roles require them to share key messages, drive cultural change and present innovative business solutions.

Our own Mandi Ackerman, Quality and Governance Program Lead at ACCPA, has participated in No Need to Wing It and says it helped her in her work.

"Regular, bite-sized sessions helped progressively build on the new concepts as revisiting the topic each week allowed my brain to keep engaging in the learning," said Mandi.

"I really liked the opportunity to share ideas and learn from the experiences of my colleagues so the times where we shared ideas and solutions was a standout.

"There were certainly some learnings which have impacted the way I design training and present information."

Instructional designer and facilitator Maria-Jane Satterthwaite says the No Need to Wing It bootcamp is an action learning experience that builds confidence to present information and strategies to a range of audiences.

"If you are aware how adults learn you can craft your message and stand out from the pack, many great ideas have failed in the execution of telling others," she said.

ACCPA's bootcamps also serve as a 'taster' to other workshops and programs, such as the ACCPA Leadership Accelerator Program, which provide a deeper dive into key topics.

In preparation for the upcoming ACCPA National Conference 23-25 October 2024, we are offering a 20 per cent discount on Leading the Way in Home Care professional development products – so get in touch to find out more.

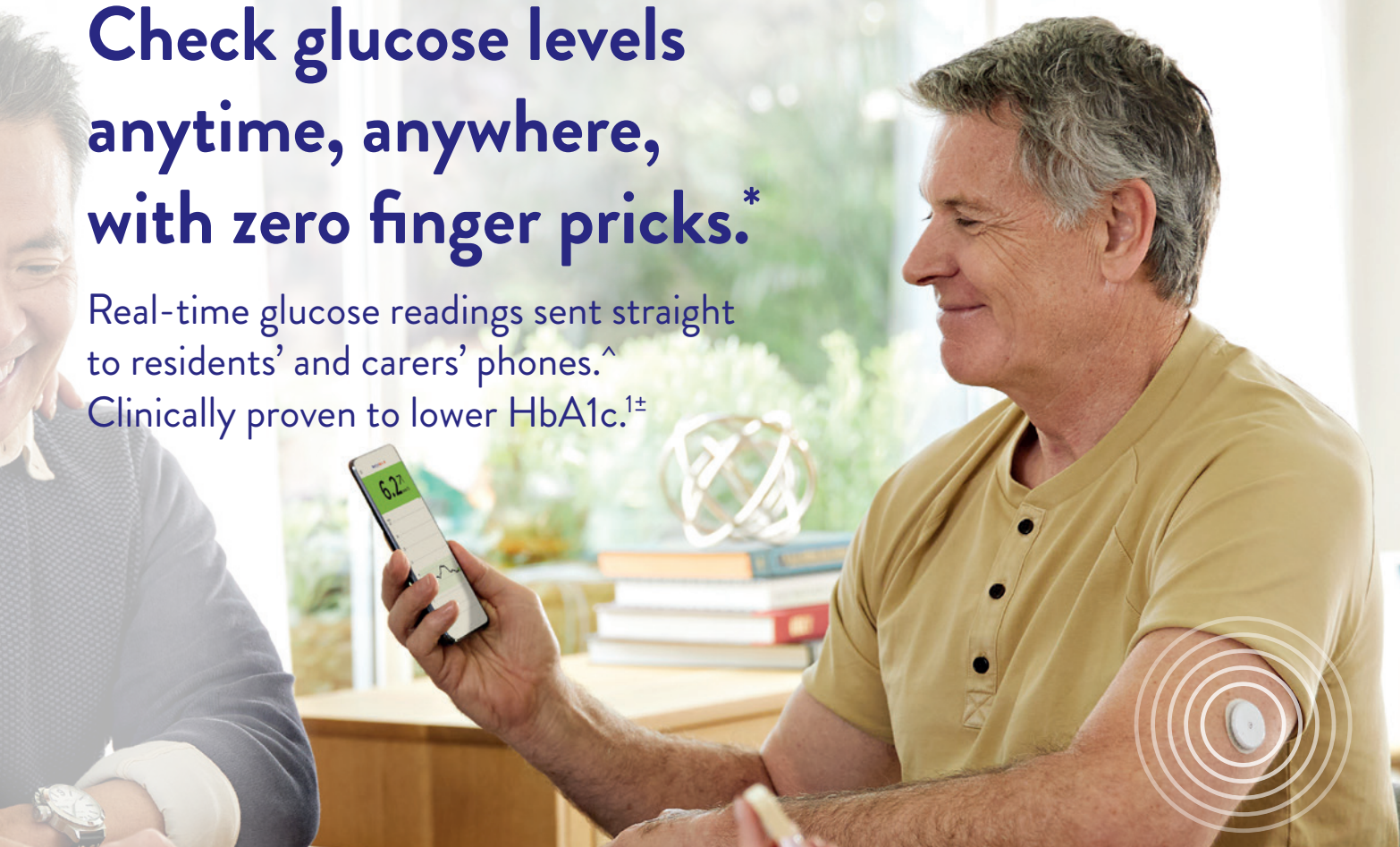
Tegan Roberts, Manager Learning & Professional Development, Aged & Community Care Providers Association accpa.asn.au/professional-development; accpa.asn.au/event/home-care-managers-bootcamp

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1. Evans M. et al. Diabetes Ther. 2022; 13(6): 1175-85.

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Building the aged care workforce in Queensland

Young people are a key focus

The Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) has partnered with the Queensland Government to deliver the 'Aged Care is the Place to Be' program – designed to attract and induct currently underrepresented cohorts in the aged care workforce.

The main focus is on young job seekers aged 15-24 years and those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

This employment pathway is a strategic response to address workforce challenges within the Queensland aged care services industry, giving registered providers free access to candidates, tailored training options for their workforce and support for candidates as they embark on their new careers.

ACCPA is thrilled to announce that our program has drawn a talented pool of candidates, with more than 100 having been attracted since the program began in March 2024.

Eighteen-year-old Shaye Pedler is one of these standout applicants, whose family ties to aged care inspired her to follow in their footsteps.

Her driving force is her heartfelt passion for enhancing the lives of seniors, which she pursues with kindness and compassion. Shaye's commitment to serving others is further evident in her volunteer work within the community, showcasing her selfless dedication to making a positive difference.

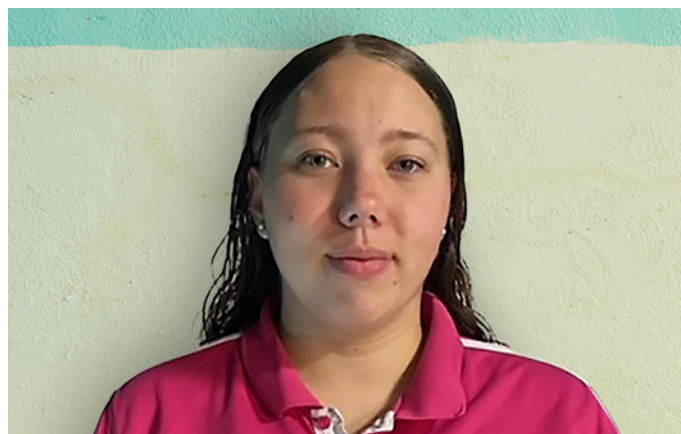
As a new entrant to the aged care workforce, Shaye completed ACCPA's 'Introduction to Aged Care' induction course, gaining an overview of both residential aged care and home care services.

Through this, Shaye was able to gain foundational skills to help prepare her to work in service provider environments.

Once inducted, candidates like Shaye can then be selected by providers registered with the Aged Care is the Place to Be program – and it wasn't long before she was approached by Diane Godley, Manager of Aged Care at home care provider Beaucare in Beaudesert Queensland.

After obtaining a police check and her first aid certificate, Shaye was offered a casual role at Beaucare and is now working towards a Certificate III in Individual Support while in employment.

Although Shaye was nervous, she felt a sense of pride and responsibility. Throughout her first days in her new role, Shaye assisted with everyday tasks, helped clients with meals



Shaye Pedler says her goal is to help older people enjoy their last years and make their lives easier.

and provided companionship. She was struck by the unique personalities and experiences of her clients.

Shaye reflected on her first day and realised that aged care wasn't just about providing physical support – it was about connecting with people, listening to their stories, and showing them love and respect.

Finishing her first shifts feeling fulfilled, Shaye knew she would be making a difference in the lives of the older Australians and she couldn't wait to continue building relationships with the people in her care.

"I graduated high school last year and started to look into long-lasting careers," said Shaye. "I knew I wanted a job that was based around helping people, but I couldn't decide between caring for children or the elderly.

"When I saw the information about the program, I instantly felt like it was the right choice and immediately applied.

"Every time I've walked into client's house I know it's exactly what I want to do. I get to hear their stories and I can help people who deserve to be looked after.

"Most importantly, I get to make them happy and that's what I look forward to the most. The best part is there's still so many more moments to enjoy and learn.

"I really want to continue to learn and grow to become the best aged care worker I can be."

**Alexandra Harrison, Information Coordinator,
Aged & Community Care Providers Association
employment.agedservicesworkforce.com.au**

This project is proudly funded by the Queensland Government through its Growing Workforce Participation Fund.

The value of ARVAS accreditation for retirement villages

A perfect fit when you're striving for excellence

CEO of Baldwin Living Paul Burkett has a career spanning more than 40 years in various forms of resident and guest accommodation and care – so he knows a lot about the customer experience.

With a background in five-star hotels both nationally and internationally and as a former chairman of the Australian Hotels Association NSW, he brings a wealth of knowledge to the retirement living sector.

Leading Baldwin Living since 2011, he has spearheaded a doubling in size of the business portfolio of the family-owned business, which now operates eight boutique retirement villages located in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Geelong, Hobart and the Gold Coast, in addition to home care services through its HomeServe offering.

"I find the retirement living sector to be rewarding and I enjoy engaging with our residents to understand their needs and working collaboratively with them and our team to find solutions," said Paul.

"I'm passionate about providing a great experience for our retirees and developing our teams to understand how to best support the ever-changing seniors market."

As an advocate for constructive engagement with residents, he has chaired the Property Council of Australia's NSW Retirement Living Council and is closely involved with the NSW Residents Association.

His focus on resident engagement is also what led him to the Australian Retirement Village Accreditation Scheme (ARVAS) – the national accreditation scheme for the retirement living sector, developed by the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) and the Property Council of Australia.

ARVAS standards hold retirement living communities accountable across seven key quality areas: community management; human resource management; resident entry and exit; resident engagement and feedback; environment,

services and facilities; safety and security; and resident care (where applicable).

These standards are designed to work directly with the Retirement Living Code of Conduct, which is the sector's self-assessment tool developed by ACCPA and the Retirement Living Council. This means any organisation that wants to apply for accreditation under ARVAS must be an active subscriber to the Retirement Living Code of Conduct.

"ARVAS was of interest to our business because we are always striving for the best, and the accreditation process helped us examine and refine all our policies and procedures," said Paul.

"It's important that the retirement living sector is standardised and robust, and by working towards ARVAS accreditation we were able to benchmark what we do and demonstrate excellence."

ARVAS was a perfect fit for Baldwin Living's values known under the acronym 'RECIPE' – 'respect', 'empowerment', 'commitment', 'integrity', 'partnership' and 'empathy' – and their mission 'to provide our residents with rewarding and carefree lifestyles that allow peace of mind, supported by our dedicated and caring staff'.



CEO of Baldwin Living Paul Burkett says ARVAS accreditation has boosted consumer confidence.

Baldwin Living is ARVAS accredited at all eight of its villages, with its accreditation-led improvements meaning they have now implemented prescriptive resident complaint handling systems at resident meetings and can promote their commitment to best-practice outcomes to customers.

“We’re very proud of our ARVAS accreditation, which we communicate very clearly to our customers on our website and all other communication tools. It shows we follow a clear code and strive for excellence,” said Paul.

“ARVAS helps ensure we are communicating regularly and clearly with residents, acknowledging and responding to feedback, and continually making improvements, which is consistent with our values.

“At an operational level, our village managers say it has helped them better understand our policies and procedures.

“For handovers to new staff, there is defined and easily tracked information on things like operations, communications and resident committees.

“Compulsory resident surveys and mid-cycle reviews prior to re-accreditation keep us on-track with feedback outside of our normal channels, so we remain accountable to our residents.

“Being accredited also helps with consumer confidence meaning it’s a lot easier to communicate with potential

customers, giving them peace of mind that we’re serious about their wellbeing and we have all our policies and procedures up to date, making it a lot easier for them to make the decision to move into one of our villages and also giving confidence to state and federal regulators.”

Paul Murphy, ACCPA's National Member Advisor for Retirement Living & Seniors Housing and Chair of the ARVAS Governance Committee, says ARVAS accreditation is particularly beneficial in a competitive marketplace.

“We regularly get calls at ACCPA from prospective residents asking about the accreditation status of villages. It’s clearly a motivating factor and serves as a competitive advantage,” he said.

“Baldwin Living have cleverly used ARVAS accreditation to enhance their operations and elevate their value proposition.

“They are a shining example of a professionally managed and quality driven retirement village operator. They focus on the resident experience and their high occupancy levels are evidence of that.”

Linda Baracioli, Aged Care Today Editor and Communications Advisor, Aged & Community Care Providers Association
accpa.asn.au/retirement-living; baldwinliving.com.au



QIP is your go-to accreditation partner for the Australian Retirement Village Accreditation Scheme (ARVAS) Standards and works with you to ensure your retirement village excels in safety, quality, and resident outcomes.

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To discover the full list of benefits of accreditation with QIP

Key benefits of ARVAS Accreditation



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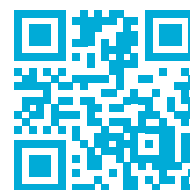
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#thanksforcaring

Aged Care Employee Day an important national day of recognition

Now in its sixth year, Aged Care Employee Day on 7 August is cemented in our national calendar as the day we recognise the more than 370,000 aged care workers who support the 1.5 million older members of our community who receive aged care services.

Across Australia, aged care providers along with residents and their families voiced their appreciation with heartfelt messages of thanks.

Providers hosted morning and afternoon teas and lunches, or marked the day with gifts to staff, while at Calvary in regional Victoria a #thanksforcaring message board saw heartfelt notes of thanks posted from residents and families.

For the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA), it was an opportunity to continue to change the narrative about the aged care services industry, by promoting numerous good news stories through various media channels.

We were also active in the media in other ways, with a live broadcast on ABC Radio Perth's Afternoons program where ACCPA State Manager WA Liz Behjat joined ABC's Michael Tetlow to shine a light on the people behind the scenes in aged care.

The broadcast included a panel forum which discussed the range of roles played by aged care workers as well as other pressing issues facing the industry.

ACCPA CEO Tom Symondson decided to mark the day by staying in his local community of Bendigo where he visited six local aged care communities – Benetas Kangaroo Flat, Bupa Bendigo, Uniting AgeWell Strath-haven Community, Calvary Mirrindong, mecwacare Flora Hill and Bendigo Health Golden Oaks Nursing Home – to show his support.

"Aged Care Employee Day has become an important date in our calendar and reminds us of the caring and professional work of our aged care staff," said ACCPA CEO Tom Symondson.



Aged Care Employee Day certificate of appreciation presentation. L-R: Benetas General Manager Residential Services Verity Leith, Benetas Kangaroo Flat Clinical Services Manager Kirsten Moss, Benetas Kangaroo Residential Manager Flat Cindy Nicholls, ACCPA CEO Tom Symondson, ACCPA State Manager VIC/TAS Danni Campbell-Manley and Benetas CEO Sandra Hills OAM.

"They're the backbone, the people who support our elders every day, and make the lives of older Australians better.

"Be they managers, personal carers, nurses, kitchen and laundry staff, diversion therapy staff, allied health professionals, administrators, gardeners or volunteers they have all worked above and beyond the call of duty to keep our older Australians cared for and safe."

Overall, ACCPA's media activity for the day reached 2.12 million people in Australia via broadcast, print and online media, including television coverage.

We received 165 'thanks for caring' messages, made up of 78 videos and 87 written messages from members, associate partners, government and the wider community, some of which we shared on our social media accounts.

Our social media activity generated over 14,000 impressions across LinkedIn, Facebook and X and there were more than 11,000 visits to the ACCPA website.

Linda Baraciolli,
Aged Care Today Editor and Communications Advisor,
Aged & Community Care Providers Association
accpa.asn.au/aged-care-employee-day



The #thanksforcaring message board at Calvary Mirrindong.

You are ACE! ACCPA awards excellence in 2024

On Aged Care Employee Day 7 August this year, the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) announced the 15 inaugural winners of our ACCPA Excellence Awards – each of them deserving individuals, teams and organisations.

Since September 2023, ACCPA has been inviting nominations to our You are ACE! industry recognition program, which recognises achievements across

residential aged care, home and community care, retirement living and seniors housing.

We received more than 460 worthy submissions Australia-wide and our judging panel selected 48 finalists which made up the selection pool for our ACCPA Excellence Awards.

The winners demonstrated excellence in key aspects of aged care including customer focus and care, innovation,

leadership, teamwork, making a difference and volunteering.

We're delighted to showcase them in Aged Care Today – as a source of inspiration and celebration for the entire aged care services industry.

In 2025, these awards will be known as the ACCPA You are ACE! Awards. If you would like to nominate an individual, team or organisation, find out more here: accpa.asn.au/ace

Winner individual

Consumer focus and care

Curt Schmeissing, Aged Care Assistant, Country To Coast Home Care Services, VIC

Curt is an outstanding aged care assistant, always going above and beyond to provide person-centred community care. An example of Curt's dedication to clients is waking up at 5:30am for the past three years to take an Anglesea client to dialysis appointments in Geelong.



Innovation

Julie Roppola, Lifestyle Services Coordinator, Bolton Clarke Montclair Brighton, VIC

Julie conducts classes for residents based on the Year 12 STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) program – because no one is too old to learn. Julie has organised numerous outings and in-house sessions to enhance learning, she conducts armchair geography and book club – and even enlisted the help of the AI robot ABL.



Leadership

Peter Williams, CEO, OneCare Limited, TAS

Peter's background as a Registered Nurse informs his role as an innovative leader. He is a member of the Tasmanian Health Senate, Chair of the ACCPA Tasmanian State Members Council and a 2023 Churchill Fellow. He established a pilot program with Tasmania Health Network to improve patient flow from hospitals to aged care and has a strong interest in nurse-led research and aged care system improvements.



Rising star

Melissa Taylor, Lifestyle Manager, Oryx Communities, WA

Through her dedication and innovative spirit, Melissa has sculpted an array of outstanding programs that resonate deeply with the unique needs and aspirations of Oryx residents. Under her guidance, Queenslea Aged Care has not just been a place to stay, it has evolved into a thriving community where every resident feels at home, valued and engaged.



Volunteer

Nickolas Makrynakis, Volunteer, Fronditha Care, VIC

Nickolas has been a volunteer at Fronditha Care for the past five years. After the loss of his wife, he decided to contribute to the community, helping others in the same way he assisted his wife. A multi-instrumentalist, Nickolas formed a band that entertains Fronditha residents with songs from all regions of Greece, inspiring residents to sing, dance and reminisce about their past.



Winner team

Consumer focus and care

Barossa Village graduate enrolled nursing team, SA

These new graduates have all come from care roles and have taken on leadership responsibilities, guiding teams of carers and providing quality care to residents. They have demonstrated great work ethic by accepting extra shifts, undertaking further education and being a positive influence to their nursing colleagues.



Innovation

KinCare team, NSW

At the heart of KinCare's success is its dedication to an efficient and effective operating model to ensure a consumer-centric view, underpinned by clinical excellence and resourced by exceptional staff. By implementing evidence-based practices and pioneering innovative care models, KinCare has achieved improved clinical outcomes and exemplary audit compliance.



Making a difference

Akooramak Aged Care lifestyle team, QLD

Akooramak is a community-run rural aged care home and the focus of the lifestyle team is to help residents continue to be engaged in the local community. Residents have been to cattle auctions, the rodeo, they dress a tree for Jumpers and Jazz, and there is a yearly ball (an old-fashioned country dance) for residents and their families – to name a few.



Project

Burnie Brae respite team, QLD

The 'Seniors Write to Seniors' project was established as part of Craigslea State High School's philosophy subject and a desire for Burnie Brae's day respite program clients to improve their social connections outside of the program. Clients were matched with students based on interest areas and concluded with a face-to-face get-together to meet in person.



Teamwork

Elderbloom Community Care Centres – Jacaranda & Wanneroo team, WA

During the Wanneroo bushfires Elderbloom staff spending five days in bushfire conditions caring for evacuated residents. They safely evacuated 64 residents to the ECU school of nursing with only six needing hospital transfers. Staff kept residents safe and happy, and ensured no overloading of the public health system during this emergency.



Winner organisation

Consumer focus and care

Gratis Home Care, SA

Gratis started as a recruitment company for the aged and disability sectors but later saw a need in aged care for a company that wasn't scared to use the word 'love'. The Charter of Aged Care Rights is given to all new clients with a genuine sincerity and the focus of their work is on empathy and compassion.



Excellence

Greek Orthodox Community Home for the Aged, NSW

This Sydney aged care home offers homely services, traditional Greek cuisine, exceptional healthcare services, open communication, Greek lifestyle, culture, traditions and spiritual care. Welfare and wellbeing is at the core of all their care services and lifestyle offerings, in a culture of genuine love and affection for each resident.



Innovation

Inasmuch Community Ltd, NSW

Inasmuch Community developed an innovative 'Week of Wellness' program based on the results of a staff survey. Delivered in 2023, the program focused on mental and emotional wellbeing, environment and culture, physical activity and movement, fulfilment and purpose, and food and nutrition, with resources and activities for maximum staff engagement.



Making a difference

Fronthitha Care, VIC

The Creative Arts Therapy project is an evidence-based program delivered across four Fronthitha Care residential aged care homes, offering residents music and creative arts therapy to facilitate artistic expression and enhance their sense of agency, control and accomplishment.



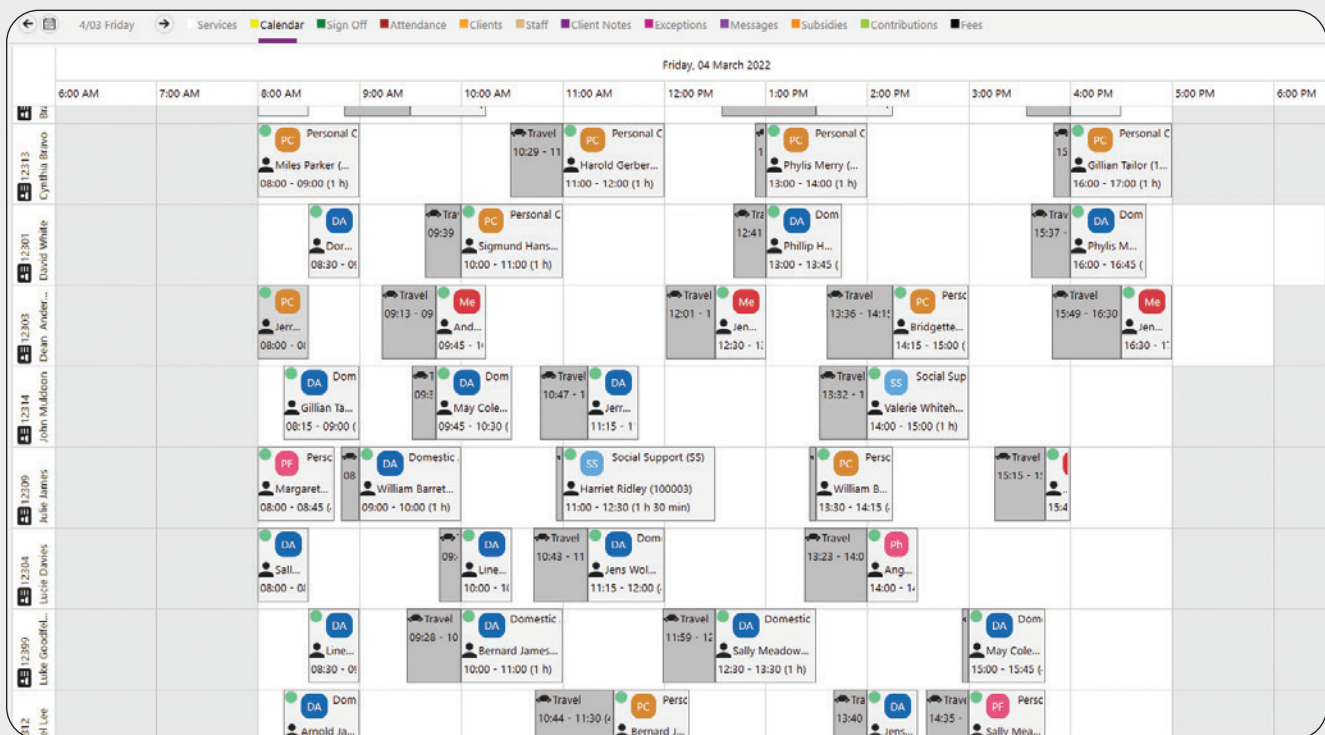
Rural and remote

Care In Motion – Community Care and Transport Inc, SA

Care In Motion helps 3,000 transport-disadvantaged clients access destinations across the Yorke Peninsula, Copper Coast, Burunga West and the North of South Australia, supporting their independence. The not-for-profit provides important support through its Community Transport Service, Community Visitors Scheme and Services Australia Centrelink Agency.



For a long time, the Aged and Disability Care sector in Australia has been looking for their software providers to offer a fully integrated solution to drive efficiencies by scheduling services, maintain compliance and seamlessly manage payroll, billing, account management and general ledger.



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- Government reporting is generated without the need to import/export data.

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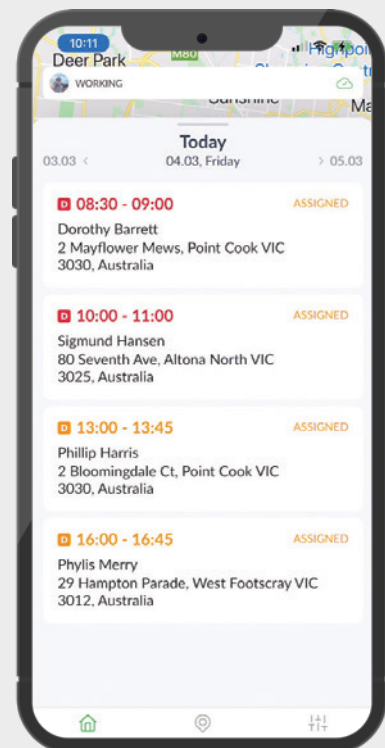
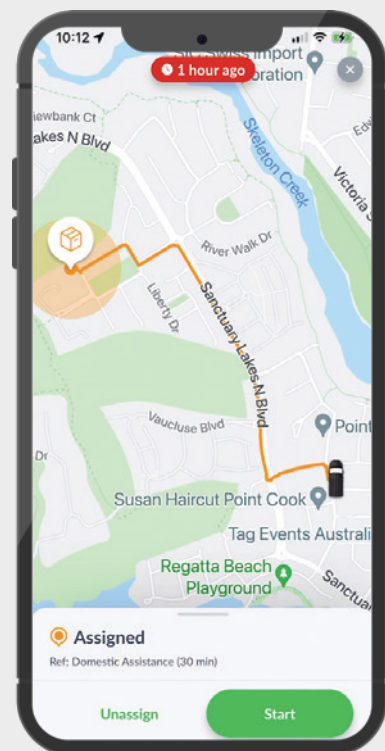
Once services are completed, real time mobile time and attendance data is matched to rostered shifts and services, enabling swift approval and processing of Payroll.

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How Meath Care transformed its operations

A model for health and wellbeing

CEO of Meath Care Chris Roberts, a trained registered nurse, was drawn to aged care because he believed he could make a difference – and his success proves he made the right decision.

“Aged care really interested me because I wanted to help make the most for people in the latter stages of their lives,” said Chris.

“I felt it was a really important and undervalued part of the nursing profession.”

Joining Meath Care in January 2022 after eight years as CEO of a single-site provider, he embarked on a new strategic plan, just as COVID-19 was making its mark on Western Australia.

“We had been largely untouched by the pandemic until February 2022, so having COVID-19 within our community magnified workforce issues,” he said.

“The biggest area of concern for me going forward was how to retain a skilled workforce and how to maximise the level of care our staff provide.”

Meath Care runs three sites in Perth, two of them residential aged care homes co-located with retirement living plus a stand-alone retirement living village. While the new strategic plan considered all three sites, implementation has been focused on the Kingsley site in the first instance.

“Workforce informed the entire strategy,” said Chris. “Our key aim was to shift the way we work from a service model to a partnership care model.”



Chris chats with Marion in one of the new dining spaces, where elements like new curtains, VJ panelling and artwork have created a warm homelike feeling.

“We knew new regulations were coming later in 2022, which meant direct care would need to increase by 20 per cent, but we also knew the funding model would change and we would get funding to cover it.

“One of the areas of need that is often missed with limited workforce is caring for the psycho-social-emotional wellbeing of residents, so with extra worker time dedicated to individuals, our planning became focused on how we could make the best use of that time to address this need.

“We created a partnership care model where we encourage and empower our staff to develop relationships with the residents, rather than be task-oriented, which has proven enormously beneficial for residents as well as staff.”

The model was implemented at Meath Care on the back of specific training and support, especially for frontline staff, and has resulted in more personalised and caring interactions between staff and residents, while staff now have a greater level of job satisfaction.



The new mural painted by residents as well as artists has created an inviting space.

This is demonstrated in an outstanding reduction in staff turnover since January 2022 – from 50 per cent to 19 per cent at Como, and from more than 30 per cent to just eight per cent at Kingsley.

One key focus for the relationship care model was mealtimes. Carers now spend more time developing relationships with residents over the mealtime experience, rather than just serving meals and clearing plates.

At the Kingsley site, the large dining room on the first floor, which accommodates 44 residents, was divided into two separate areas. This has made the dining experience less noisy and more intimate, less like a catering hall and more like a dining room. Due to its success, dining rooms are now being made smaller on the other two levels, for the remaining residents.

Elevating the dining experience was undertaken as part of Maggie Beer's Big Mission project – a multi-dimensional project that looked at how to improve food in aged care and how the physical environment could be enhanced to support health and wellbeing.

The project revamped the menu from a nutritional and taste perspective. With the benefit of having the Maggie Beer Foundation and a dietitian involved from the start, new meals were trialled with residents who were able to inform on the changes to the menu.

"The nexus between our strategy and mealtimes is that it's a real opportunity to create meaningful interactions with residents – from talking about food choices to asking about their day," said Chris.

"Resident satisfaction levels with mealtimes has doubled, which we know through independent surveys conducted that give us very candid responses."

Other changes inside including repainting the interiors, acoustic panelling, new soft furnishings and better lighting, while externally landscaping was done to the central courtyard and mural artists worked with residents on an artwork.

Led by Josh Byrne, a presenter on ABC TV's Gardening Australia, the outdoor area was transformed into an inviting, usable space for residents and their guests.

With resident input, it now includes thriving plants including sensory herbs like mint, basil and rosemary (which residents pick for cooking activities), a BBQ, a new pergola and additional outdoor furniture.

"We're really proud of the transformation at Meath Care, especially how our relationship care model has been embraced," said Chris.

"We've gone from a situation where 75 per cent of staff interactions were task-oriented, to flipping that around to now having 75 per cent of staff interactions around meaningful relationship building with residents.

"That's a win for residents, their loved ones and our workforce."

Linda Baracioli,
Aged Care Today Editor and Communications Advisor,
Aged & Community Care Providers Association
meath.org.au

Training for busy leaders

Accelerated learning will take your team to the next level

Would you like to build capacity in your aged care leaders but don't have the time? Then choose an accelerated learning approach.

The Leadership Accelerator Program can be completed in just three months – with an investment of just 12 hours.

For leaders in operational, clinical and corporate roles, this practical program is delivered as two interactive two-hour workshops each month – or you can purchase modules individually.

Upon completion, your leaders will have a deeper knowledge of key criteria and skills outlined in the Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework – along with a renewed mindset and fresh enthusiasm.

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The Leadership Accelerator Program has been developed by Aged & Community Care Providers Association specifically for the aged care sector.

Leadership Accelerator Program

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More than a meal

The importance of the dining experience for people with dementia

Mealtime is often the highlight of a person's day, and a universal way to treat the senses and socialise.

A meal can be a reminder of the past, a time to connect with friends or family, to give sensory pleasure and refuel your body to live as well as possible.

For people living with dementia, particularly those living in residential aged care, meals and positive dining experiences are equally essential to good care and maintaining wellbeing.

Dementia affects people in different ways, and it is common for people living with dementia to experience changes in their behaviour or emotional state.

Those caring for someone with dementia may notice changes in the way they experience food, eating and the dining experience. Equally, sometimes a resident may be simply withdrawn and not interested in their meal.

Through a problem-solving approach and employing person-centred care, there are practical ways to support people living with dementia and assist with this withdrawal or changed behaviours related to the dining experience.

Person-centred dining

Delivering quality, person-centred dining experiences offers a range of benefits including improved quality of life, improved eating habits and sound dietary intake.

Exploring favourite meals or dishes with residents and their families can enrich the cultural connection and dining experience for people living with dementia and provide a positive conversation starter.

Encouraging staff to survey residents on any preferred meals or suggestions around themed foods will make residents feel engaged and genuinely included – especially if their ideas are adopted.

Tips for a dementia-friendly dining experience

We know there are a variety of factors that influence the dining experience for someone living with dementia, which can differ for each individual, but generally relate to:

- **Building up to the dining experience.** Can residents smell the food before they arrive in the dining room? Did they know what was for lunch? A loss of taste or smell can reduce a person's appetite. Prompt residents to notice the smell of food preparation, mentioning 'lunch smells good' in conversations before dining.

- **Setting of the dining experience.** Is there harsh lighting? Is it noisy? Is the room inviting? Minimise noise, activities and other distractions where possible.
- **Presentation of the dining experience.** What is on the plate? Is there a variety of colours? Serve only one plate of food at a time and use plain-coloured, flat plates. Remove distracting items from the table. While the taking of medications is a part of providing care, it should not become the focus of mealtimes in a way that detracts from the experience of the meal for the person.
- **Physical engagement with the dining experience.** Can the person comfortably eat the meal? Serve finger food they can eat with their hands or serve food in a bowl if it makes it easier to eat. Optimise any opportunities for purposeful engagement such as assisting staff to set the table, creating flower arrangements for each table or helping to clear dishes once the meal has finished

Dine with Ted (VR)

Dementia Australia recently launched Dine with Ted (VR) to support the dining experience for people living with dementia.

Dine with Ted (VR) is a three-hour, face-to-face immersive workshop focusing on the dining experience and how it impacts the person living with dementia – suitable for staff providing support to people living with dementia in various care settings.

In this workshop, participants will use virtual reality and avatar technology to see the dining experience through the eyes of someone living with dementia in residential care and from the perspective of a care worker.

Participants explore how food, the physical environment and support can greatly influence the dining experience.

Dine with Ted (VR) responds to the upcoming strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards around dining experiences for people living in residential aged care, and we encourage providers to upskill their staff in this elevated area of need.

To enquire about this course, visit the Dementia Australia website here or email: development@dementia.org.au

Dr David Sykes, Director, Centre for Dementia Learning
dementia.org.au

The National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500 provides support to people living with dementia, their families and carers, and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Building bonds through storytime

The creative ageing programs shaping dementia care at Whiddon

In an industry where innovation and compassion go hand in hand, finding new and exciting ways to bring residents closer to greater wellbeing and holistic health outcomes is paramount – including ‘creative ageing’.

The term has emerged from the wealth of evidence around the connection between creative expression and health, and the growing recognition of the profound impact of creative therapy on the lives of older people.

At award-winning care provider Whiddon, creative ageing encompasses a variety of creative expression programs offering residents opportunities to engage in activities that range from music and dance to cooking, art and animal therapy.

Whether through simple, enjoyable pastimes like gardening, singing and storytelling, or more structured therapies designed for individuals living with dementia, these activities offer far more than just entertainment – they are essential initiatives to support the physical, mental and emotional health of residents.

“We’ve seen the incredible effects that these programs have on our residents,” said Karn Nelson, Whiddon’s Executive General Manager for Consumer & Positive Ageing.

“It’s not about giving residents something to do. Creative ageing programs foster connections, offer a sense of purpose and encourage ongoing engagement with life.”

Creative ageing, connection and dementia care

In a world where ageing is too often stereotyped with physical and cognitive decline, creative ageing programs are flipping the script.

Karn believes it has never been more important to prioritise initiatives where residents are encouraged to pursue their interests, share their knowledge and find common ground with their peers – especially for the 54 per cent of residential care residents living with dementia.

She continues, “People living with dementia often express a desire to remain active in their communities, yet one of the biggest challenges following a dementia diagnosis is a loss of confidence and often increased social isolation.”

‘Chat, Stories & Tea’ is a creative ageing program run exclusively by Whiddon for people with memory challenges, dementia or short-term memory loss.

The group-based therapy draws from Cognitive Stimulation Therapy that has been proven to improve cognitive function and mood, and increase self-confidence and self-esteem around communication and social interaction.



Creative ageing activities at Whiddon include intergenerational programs.

Residents can use this program as therapy to connect with each other but also their carers too, the cornerstone of Whiddon’s relationship-based care philosophy.

Nurturing bonds across generations

In recent years, Whiddon has expanded its creative ageing initiatives to include several intergenerational programs, fostering connections between residents and younger people.

These programs aim to bridge the gap between young and old, offering mutual benefits and learning experiences across generations.

For residents, intergenerational initiatives provide consistent and engaging social interactions, helping to keep residents feeling connected to their local communities.

The relationships formed through these interactions can enhance mental wellbeing and quality of life, provide a renewed sense of purpose, and encourage continued learning and curiosity.

Conversely, younger participants gain valuable insights and wisdom from older adults, fostering a deeper understanding and respect for older people.

Together the programs help to reduce ageism and create greater intergenerational unity and better and more caring communities for all.

Storytime for Dementia Action Week

In celebration of Dementia Action Week, Whiddon proudly hosted a special intergenerational storytime initiative in many of its residential care homes across New South Wales and southeast Queensland.

As part of the week, children from local schools and daycares visited care homes to read *Forget Me Not*, a touching story by Nancy Van Laan, introducing Alzheimer’s disease through a young girl’s relationship with her grandmother.

The initiative was designed to leverage Whiddon’s successful creative ageing programs, sparking conversations about dementia between generations, fostering greater awareness among young people – all while contributing to a broader vision of more dementia-friendly communities.

Whiddon
whiddon.com.au

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COMMUNITY CARE

The benefits of bidets for older people

Aged care providers invited to get involved in new research study

As Australia's population continues to age, providing high-quality care and maintaining the dignity of older adults in residential aged care homes becomes an increasingly important challenge.

One innovative solution that has gained attention for its potential to improve hygiene, dignity and overall wellbeing is the bidet – and now a new research project aims to quantify the benefits.

InteliCorp and The BIDET SHOP have entered a partnership with Charles Darwin University in the Retrofit Bidet Clinical Trial.

This study aims to evaluate the feasibility, acceptability, practicality and effectiveness of bidets as an alternative to traditional manual post-voiding cleaning for individuals receiving care, care workers and nurses in hospitals, homes and aged care settings.

Our research seeks to address the current gap in knowledge by exploring how electronic bidets can support patients with toileting limitations and assist staff in providing daily intimate personal care.

We are inviting facilities to participate in this de-identified study, which will involve regular use of the bidet and completing an online questionnaire. Both users and carers will provide feedback on the ease of use, benefits and limitations of the bidet.

A new approach to personal hygiene

Bidets, commonly associated with improved personal hygiene, have long been utilised in many parts of the world. Their introduction in residential aged care homes brings a new approach to addressing the unique needs of older adults.

Traditional methods of post-voiding cleaning, such as using toilet paper, can be less effective for older individuals who

may face mobility limitations, reduced dexterity or other physical challenges.

Bidets offer a more thorough and comfortable cleansing experience, utilising water jets that can help prevent skin irritation and infections.

Reducing the risk of infections

One significant benefit of bidet use is the potential to reduce the risk of infections, particularly urinary tract infections (UTIs). Older adults are more susceptible to UTIs due to factors such as weakened immune systems, incontinence and reduced bladder control.

Bidets can aid in maintaining proper perineal hygiene, reducing the accumulation of bacteria and decreasing the likelihood of infections. By promoting a cleaner and more sanitary environment, bidets contribute to the overall wellbeing of residents and can lead to fewer instances of UTIs.

Managing incontinence and supporting dignity

With incontinence a common challenge faced by older adults in residential aged care homes, bidets offer an effective solution for managing incontinence-related hygiene.

The gentle and efficient cleansing provided by bidets can help residents feel more comfortable and cleaner, enhancing their overall sense of dignity.

Furthermore, bidets may reduce the stigma associated with incontinence, promoting a more open and compassionate atmosphere within the home.

Alleviating constipation

Constipation is another prevalent issue among older adults, often exacerbated by factors such as reduced physical activity, medication side effects and dietary changes.

Bidets have been shown to have a positive impact on bowel management

by promoting more complete voiding of the bowel.

The warm water stream from the bidet can help relax the anal sphincter muscles and facilitate more regular bowel movements. This can lead to a reduction in constipation-related discomfort and a potential decrease in the need for laxatives or other interventions.

Easing the workload for caregivers

Bidets not only benefit care recipients but also ease the workload for caregivers, including staff members and family caregivers. The use of bidets can streamline toileting routines, reducing the time and effort required for manual cleaning and changing of incontinence products.

The reduced workload associated with bidets can minimise physical strain and stress for carers while allowing them more time for personalised care and engaging with residents, ultimately improving the quality of their interactions.

Promoting sustainability and cost savings

Bidets can contribute to sustainability and operational cost savings within residential aged care homes by reducing consumption of toilet paper and incontinence products.

The decreased paper waste also aligns with environmentally friendly practices – something that can be a competitive point of difference in the marketplace.

Get involved in the study

We welcome aged care providers to participate in our bidet trial. For full details and to register your facility, please email Trade1@intelicorp.com.au with the subject 'clinical trial'. After registration, the InteliCorp team will guide you through the next steps.

Craig Spence, National Business Development Manager, InteliCorp/ The BIDET SHOP
thebidetshop.com.au;
intelicorp.com.au

What does quality of life really mean?

Why 'healthspan' and 'strengthspan' are important concepts

Last summer I travelled to my homeland Finland where I enjoyed the nightless night and midnight sun – and was reminded of the investment the country makes in fitness and exercise for all ages.

Finland has made a commitment to supporting the health of its citizens with many open and accessible spaces fitted with exercise equipment.

When the sun doesn't set, these spaces allow people to engage in exercise outdoors even throughout the night.

Strength training in a forest by a lake close to midnight is not an experience that many can have, and it was definitely a memorable moment for me when I joined a friend at an outdoor exercise park.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" and wellness as "the optimal state of health of individuals and groups".

These definitions reflect the activities and choices we make, and the degree to which we control health-related risk factors and include beneficial factors in our lives, such as nutrition, exercise and positive social interactions.

These concepts are closely linked and it could be said that good health is our goal while wellness is the by-product of a healthy lifestyle, allowing us to live the life we choose.

When talking about healthy ageing, we often focus on longevity and quality of life, otherwise known as 'lifespan' and 'healthspan' respectively in the literature.

While lifespan simply means the time we are alive, healthspan is a more encompassing concept which has been defined by Matt Kaeberlein (*GeroScience*, 2018) as "the period

of life spent in good health, free from the chronic diseases and disabilities of ageing".

A recent editorial in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* (July 2024) added a new term, 'strengthspan', describing the impact of physical strength on overall health across all stages of life.

The new definition refers to the impact of exercise and strength at every age, from childhood to the older years, and is consistent with today's focus on healthy ageing – it's not just about living longer, rather we aim to live better with improved quality of life.

As said by the authors of the *BJSM* editorial, "Strengthspan-centred actions will add life to years and not just years to life."

Exercise and generally keeping active is essential at every age, which needs to be addressed if people are to age with health and wellness.

Already in 2012, *The Lancet* flagged physical inactivity as a major non-communicable disease worldwide. In the original article by Lee et al., it was estimated that physical inactivity causes six per cent of the burden of disease from coronary heart disease, seven per cent of type 2 diabetes, 10 per cent of breast cancer, and 10 per cent of colon cancer. Inactivity was also the reason for nine per cent of cases of premature mortality.

As we get older the rate of ageing increases, and more emphasis needs to be placed on appropriate, progressive strength and balance training, to keep up good health, strength and mobility, maintain and increase muscle and bone mass, and prevent chronic diseases.

A constant and growing volume of research provides evidence for the best modalities for exercise, with the results summarised in many literature reviews.

Based on these findings, the World Health Organisation and Australian Government have recommended



Tuire using exercise equipment in Lehtisaari, Säämätsalo, Finland around midnight during Finland's summer this year.

people over 65 include at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity per week.

In addition, they recommend strength training two days per week and varied multicomponent physical activity emphasising functional balance and strength training three days a week.

Sadly these guidelines are not being met by the general population, leading to an increase of chronic diseases, frailty and falls.

In 2022 the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported 57 per cent of adults aged 65 and over did not meet the physical activity guidelines and 84 per cent did not do enough muscle-strengthening activities.

We must keep on advocating for exercise for all ages, from the fittest to the frailest, to give everyone the chance for their best health.

Aged care providers have an important role to play in the programs they offer and the facilities they install.

Exercise should be easily accessible to all – whether in a public park in Finland or an aged care home in Australia.

Dr Tuire Karaharju-Huisman,
Physiotherapist, Accredited Exercise
Physiologist, HUR Australia
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Occupational therapists in aged care

A vital resource for quality care

Occupational therapists (OTs) are essential in aged care, helping older adults maintain independence and engage in meaningful activities like personal care or leisure and social pursuits.

Despite their vital role, many aged care providers are not fully aware of the broad scope of services that OTs can offer.

To address this gap, and to support the occupational therapy profession in building capability and capacity in aged care, Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA) has launched a *Capability Framework for Occupational Therapists working with Older People (Aged Care)*.

OTA believe the framework is a valuable tool for the occupational therapy profession and the aged care sector more broadly. It not only supports OTs in building their capabilities and advancing their careers but also helps providers understand and harness the full potential of OTs in delivering high-quality care.

By integrating OTs into their care models, aged care providers can enhance their services, meet regulatory requirements and most importantly, improve the quality of life for the older adults in their care.

The framework offers aged care providers a comprehensive guide to understanding and utilising the full range of skills that OTs bring to the sector.

While designed primarily for OTs to tailor their professional development, the framework is equally beneficial for employers, clients and funders. It highlights the value of OTs and clarifies the diverse ways in which they contribute to the health and wellbeing of older adults.

For aged care providers, employing OTs means gaining access to a professional who can significantly enhance the quality of care provided.

OTs are trained to assess how an individual's physical and cognitive abilities interact with their environment and daily activities.

From managing physical and cognitive changes to addressing social and emotional needs, OTs can prescribe specialised equipment, manage complex personal care and pressure

injury needs and foster opportunities for meaningful engagement and social interaction.

OTs also play an important role in delivering restorative care approaches to help older people address the challenges associated with ageing and positively influence their quality of life.

Changes such as reduced mobility leading to increased risk of falling and ultimately the loss of confidence, is a common occurrence that OTs manage on a regular basis. Evidence shows that OT-led interventions can reduce the rate of falls significantly – by almost 40 per cent in high-risk individuals living at home.

Additionally, OTs play a role in supporting people with cognitive decline, such as dementia, by addressing changes in function, mood, behaviour and communication – delivering strategies that reduce the use of restrictive practices in aged care.

They do this by developing person-centred Behaviour Support Plans and promoting non-pharmacological interventions to manage the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, while specialised mental health OTs are able to deliver focused psychological strategies for older people experiencing mental illness and reduce the need for pharmacotherapies.

OTA's new framework also underscores the importance of OTs in regulatory compliance. When working to their full scope of practice, OTs align with most of the Quality Standards and Quality Indicators currently in use. Their focus on person-centred care ensures aged care services are tailored to the individual needs and goals of older adults.

Beyond clinical care, OTs can contribute to the enhancement of the aged care workforce. OTs can upskill personal care workers through education and training, enhancing the workforce's capacity to deliver high-quality care.

This not only improves operational efficiency but also reduces the likelihood of incidents and non-compliance, ultimately leading to cost savings.

To find out more about the capability framework for occupational therapists working with older people or to learn how an OT can support older Australians in your care, please contact us: info@otaus.com.au

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Use better, use less, in continence management

Why product choice is important

When it comes to continence management, the choice of incontinence products significantly impacts outcomes, affecting leakage, skin health and overall wellbeing. By optimising product usage, we can achieve better results while minimising waste.

As demands on care providers increase, managing budgets and resources becomes ever more challenging. However, value extends beyond unit prices; it encompasses efficiency and effective resource utilisation to provide optimal care.

Product effectiveness

When evaluating the effectiveness of absorbent products, it's essential to look beyond just the total absorbency. Here are some key factors to consider:

- **Acquisition rate.** This refers to how quickly the product absorbs liquid. Ideally, a lower acquisition rate is desirable, as it ensures efficient absorption and helps to protect skin and keep it dry.
- **Rewet.** The amount of urine that seeps back out of the pad after compression is crucial. A low rewet value indicates better performance, as it minimises discomfort and potential leakage while protecting skin from moisture.
- **Product usability.** Consider products that are easy to apply by carers and wearers, enable toileting and are comfortable to wear.

Remember that these factors collectively contribute to the product's ability to keep users dry and comfortable.

The ripple effect

Ignoring incontinence can have far-reaching consequences. While it may not be seen as important as other conditions, making the wrong choices can harm lives and businesses. Opting for cheaper, lower-quality products may seem cost-effective initially, but it often leads to greater expenses over time.

The benefits of opting for quality products are far-reaching:

- **For healthcare professionals,** it means fewer product changes leaving more time to spend on building relationships.
- **For prescribers,** it means having greater confidence in the advice they give and the transformative impact it will have.
- **For carers,** quality products instil confidence and support in a challenging role, meaning there is one less thing to worry about.
- **For users,** enhanced comfort and confidence enables them to pursue activities they love without fear or discomfort, while maintaining dignity.

Evidence from a pilot study

An eight-week value-based procurement pilot conducted in two care homes in Lincolnshire, England, in 2023 highlighted the impact of product choices. Clinically appropriate products outperformed those selected based solely on unit cost, in the following ways:

- Patients using the cheaper product experienced up to 2.5 leaks per day, requiring frequent changes and six pads daily, at a total cost of £15.33 or \$30.09 AUD.
- Using higher-quality pads reduced leaks to an average of 0.5 per person, with only four pads needed, at a total cost of £6.68 or \$13.11 AUD.
- There was a 75 per cent reduction in leakages requiring bedding or clothing washing and an 18 per cent increase in patients' ability to self-toilet, saving time and improving skin health.

Unlocking time for genuine care

Imagine granting your staff an extra 20 minutes each day. Cheap incontinence pads often leak, necessitating frequent changes. Beyond the inconvenience, leakage causes skin irritation, leading to discomfort for patients. Moreover, increased laundry, detergent and energy costs add up.

When it comes to healthcare products, quality matters. Not only does it save you money in the long run, but it also significantly impacts patient comfort. We need to consider the following in overall continence management:

- **Re-evaluate double padding.** While double padding might seem like a good idea for extra absorbency, it can lead to unintended consequences, such as leakage, skin friction, Incontinence Associated Dermatitis and discomfort. Choosing a pad with the correct absorbency and fit will better reduce the risk of leakage and skin issues.
- **Know your product quality.** Understand the quality of the products you choose. Factors like absorbency efficiency, breathability and fit play a crucial role. Tailor your selection to meet individual needs, including mobility, cognition and skin health.

As an industry, let's shift our focus from unit prices to holistic continence management that prioritises comfort, dignity and wellbeing.

Karen Fuller,
TENA Services Marketing Manager
TENAProfessional.com.au

HDS – Dietary and Menu Management System



**Auto Calculate
Production Numbers
& Lunch & Dinner
Summary**



**Recipe & Allergen
Management**



**Ingredients
Estimate**



**Clinical
System
Integration**



**Catering
Survey**



**Meal
Feedback**



**Diet Monitoring &
Consumption Report**



**Digital
Menu
Display**

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HDS is a web-based application that maintains resident diet profiles & offers menu management. HDS is a complete digital platform that eliminates 100% of the paperwork from catering. Staff are able to use iPad or tablet to take orders from residents for their meal choices and can also update residents diet profile any time (various authority level access).

The best part of HDS is that it is a "live" system, so any changes made to a residents' profile will be reflected immediately on all kitchen reports and lists. HDS leaves no room for communication gaps. HDS establishes great efficiency in catering.

Staff can actually utilise their time and energy towards creating a better dining experience for residents rather than continuously trying to keep up with the paperwork. It is a one stop shop when it comes to dietary management. HDS is designed by a chef with 14 years of experience in aged care catering, hence it provides specific information to kitchen staff at the fingertip.

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Innovative engagement project at Lifeview

Making a world of difference through giving

Argyle Court residents David, Geoff and Kevin with Maintenance Officer Robbie (second from right) working on bicycles for the Re-Cycle program at Argyle Court.

Residents living at Lifeview homes in Melbourne's south-east are helping drive two new innovative charitable programs.

Lifeview Paying It Forward is raising funds for six local charitable causes throughout the year, while Lifeview Re-Cycle is donating restored second-hand bicycles back into the community.

Paying It Forward has to date raised over \$3,000 in its first four months of operation, with funds raised benefiting the Emerald Kindergarten, which was damaged by fire earlier this year, and the Women's Spirit Project, which supports disadvantaged women from Frankston and surrounding areas.

"The Paying It Forward initiative is an opportunity for our staff to nominate small, local charities in the community that are making a difference but that don't get a lot of financial support or promotion," said Lifeview CEO Samantha Jewell.

"There are so many groups doing wonderful work that would genuinely benefit from some extra funding, and we want to make a difference for them.

"The first two months have been amazing, with working groups set up

in each Lifeview home, made up of residents and staff. They are working together to come up with various ways to raise funds, such as sausage sizzles, raffles, dress-up days and more."

Samantha said helping residents remain connected to their communities was at the heart of the program.

"They want to give back. They have spent their whole lives supporting various causes and being connected to the community in many ways. It should not stop just because they have moved into aged care," she said.

"This program provides residents and staff with an additional sense of purpose and the initial response has been really heartwarming."

Emerald Pre-School Parent Advisory Group President Kate Spencer said the Paying It Forward funds received recently "will make a huge difference".

"This funding will go towards a lot of the incursions we love to hold for the children each year," she said.

"There are some music-based incursions and some wildlife and animal-based incursions that the educators love to run with both the three- and four-year-old groups.

"We weren't sure if we would be able to run them this year, but this will definitely allow us to continue that curriculum for the children."

Lifeview Emerald Glades residents regularly visit the Emerald Kindergarten, and in fact resident Elaine used to be an assistant at the pre-school, with the pre-school parents recalling her as 'Mrs Morris' from their time attending as children.

Re-Cycle meanwhile is a program launched by Lifeview earlier this year, which sees male residents come together fortnightly to repair and restore pre-loved bicycles.

The men have been meeting in the shed at Lifeview Argyle Court in Chelsea, where they work with maintenance officer Robbie and social support team member Gayle.

The group repairs bicycles sourced from hard rubbish or bikes that have been donated to the program, repairing them and restoring them for donation back into the community.

"We've all grown up using our hands for this kind of work and to be able to reuse those skills now just gives you a little bit more engagement and enjoyment," said

Robbie, who the residents have dubbed 'our leader'.

"These guys (at Argyle Court) have taken it to the next level, saying 'give us this wheel and we'll polish it up while you're not here', which is great.

"Some of the stories from these guys here might have to stay in the shed.

"Listening to their backgrounds, their childhoods and things like that, it's very nice and good to be able to give back through a program like this."

The idea for the Re-Cycle program stemmed from last year's Lifeview staff leadership conference, where team members took part in an activity to build flat pack bicycles from scratch.

Once all bikes were all built and on display, it was announced the bikes would be donated to children from the Heart Kids charity.

When the kids and their parents suddenly emerged on the day, the youngsters quickly found their new bikes and were overjoyed as they rode around the room.

"That was really special and stuck with everyone in the room," Robbie recalls.

"It was afterwards that Sam (Lifeview CEO) pulled me aside and said we want to turn this into a resident program, building bikes to donate back into the community. It's a great idea."

Samantha explained the importance of resident activities such as Re-Cycle in aged care.

"It's very important for mental health and wellbeing that residents are engaging in activities that they enjoy. Things that have always brought them joy, such as working on bikes and projects, it's a great social gathering for the men," she said.

"The giving back to the community aspect of the program is also very important to the residents. They know these bikes are going back into the community to be cherished by people who don't have a bike and will be enormously appreciative of the residents' efforts."

Argyle Court resident David has been attending Re-Cycle sessions since the beginning. He looks forward to it every fortnight and feels it is more valuable to his health and wellbeing than some may think.

"Sometimes people in places like this perhaps used to retire and sit around and do nothing," he said.

"But now, with these programs, you're keeping people active and engaged. Mentally and physically to keep doing things is much better for people.

"I find it very important. If you sit around and do nothing, and the TV is not worth watching nowadays, these programs are very important. They keep us interested."

Fellow resident and Re-Cycle team member Kevin, who used to work for Toyota, agrees, saying he thoroughly enjoys the sessions.

"Absolutely I look forward to them. It's great," he said.

The Re-Cycle program has expanded to Lifeview Willow Wood in Cranbourne, where 10 residents took part in the first session recently and all vowed to return the following fortnight.

**Cody Winnell, Executive Manager
Marketing & Communications,
Lifeview
lifeview.com.au**



(Back row, L-R): Kate Spencer, President of the Emerald Pre School Inc parents group and Lifeview Social Support Coordinator Marc; (middle row, L-R): Emerald Glades residents Elisabeth, Elaine and Janet; (front row, L-R): kinder students Sebastian, Benji, Patrick, Marley and Xavier with a special cheque for \$1238.25 courtesy of the Lifeview Paying It Forward initiative.



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Bridging lives lived

Intergenerational program making a difference at Quirindi

Many scientific studies have highlighted the profound benefits of intergenerational programs, which create meaningful connections between the elderly and the young – and now these benefits are brought to life through the collaboration between Quirindi Care Services (QCS) and local schools in regional New South Wales.

At the heart of this collaboration lies a friendship between resident Jim Spradbrow and Jesse, a Quirindi High School student doing work experience at QCS.

Jesse chose QCS for his work experience to enhance personal skills like patience and expand his knowledge, driven by the unique opportunities to learn and grow in ways he felt he couldn't find elsewhere.

"I enjoy spending time with the residents. I've enjoyed walking and talking with the residents as well as the craft groups," Jesse shared.

Jim, reflecting on Jesse's arrival at Eloura, expressed how his heart lifted when the high schooler first visited. He found it special to have a young person willing to spend time with older people such as himself.

"Having Jesse here is wonderful. He is a lovely young man, and since he has been coming to Eloura, he has become more open and confident," Jim said.

Jim observed that Jesse's dedication to making the residents' days better has had a noticeable impact on both the young man and the older people.

Jim and Jesse's bond began with simple conversations and a shared love of gardening, craft and good conversation. The joy they find in these shared moments is palpable and adds a refreshing and dynamic element to their daily lives.

Kim Riley, General Manager at QCS, highlighted the emotional rewards that come from these interactions. She noted that students like Jesse gain self-confidence and self-awareness through their engagement with residents, while the residents benefit from the fresh energy and cheerfulness of youth.

"This interaction builds self-confidence and self-awareness in students and brings immense emotional rewards," Kim said.

The intergenerational connections at QCS extend beyond individual friendships. Regular visits from Quirindi Preschool children, some of whom have relatives at Eloura, bring joy and warmth to the community.

Tyson Tolmie, Head of Lifestyle at Eloura, says resident surveys show a strong desire for engagement with children, making these visits a priority.



L-R: Jesse and Jim bonded through a shared interest in gardening.

"Activities like bowling and gardening help build friendships, and it is touching to see the children call out to residents and run up to give them high fives. These moments of joy and connection highlight the community's commitment to fostering meaningful relationships across generations," Tyson said.

Tyson shared his thoughts on the broader impact of these intergenerational programs, saying, "It can be repetitive to be in the company of those only in the same position as oneself. While our aim is for our residents to have a diverse range of activities on a daily basis, life could easily become isolated if we were not able to find ways to engage with the community.

"Our residents truly enjoy the interaction with younger generations, and the impact they have truly cannot be overstated. It's just a joy."

Research shows intergenerational programs improve physical, mental and emotional wellbeing for older people while promoting empathy and social skills in children and adolescents – but Kim says interacting with children and young people promotes significant improvements in wellbeing, including increased physical activity, social engagement and overall happiness among residents, long after the visit ends.

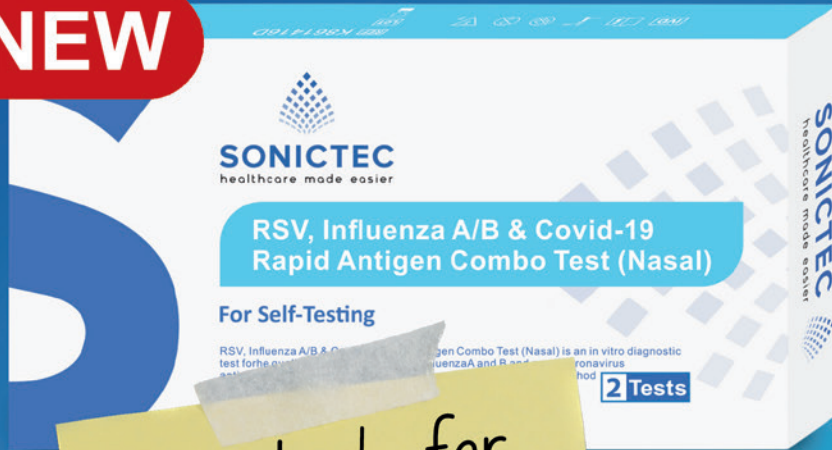
"The benefits of these intergenerational engagements lie in the interaction between those just starting out in life and those reflecting on a life well-lived," she said.

"There is a unique beauty in seeing the young bring fresh energy and the elderly share their wisdom, creating a harmonious and enriching experience for both.

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Helping older people explore their creativity

Benetas celebrates artistic expression across aged care and retirement living

Benetas is proud to foster and celebrate artistic expression right across its retirement living communities and residential aged care homes.

Bridgewater Lake Retirement Estate is one of the aged care provider's most artistic sites, cultivating a reputation across Melbourne's north as a creative hub, with education opportunities and exhibitions of high-quality art.

Central to this is the Bridgewater Lake Art Show, which for more than a decade has drawn crowds of people to the Roxburgh Park retirement community.

The most recent showcase featured more than 200 pieces by 40 local artists, transforming the retirement village's community centre into an upscale art gallery for a weekend.

The exhibitions include works by Bridgewater Lake residents and members of the Glenroy Art Group, Craigieburn Art Group, Plenty Valley Arts and Sunbury Art Society.

The retirement village also regularly hosts noted local artists to present and teach residents keen to expand their artistic skillsets.

In July, the village hosted watercolour artist Ted Dansey who took residents and other local creative minds through his philosophy and the insights he's gained throughout his career.

The 2007 Victorian Artist Society's Artist of the Year winner has been practising art for most of his life, plying his talent across a wide range of fields while also taking home a list of sought-after artistic awards.

He studied watercolours with internationally renowned painter David Taylor in the early nineties with the medium continuing to be his favourite, though he does admit to dragging out the oils on occasions.

On top of his Victorian Artists Society year prize, Mr Dansey has won first prize for watercolour in the Moonee Valley Art Show and Hobsons Bay Art Show, as well as Best in Show at St Peter's Art Show.

Creativity and artistic expression are also common across Benetas aged care homes. A recent example includes additions to the Corowa Court residential aged care home in Mornington.



Bridgewater Lake Retirement Estate resident Nicola Kelly pictured with her artwork displayed at Bridgewater Lake Art Show

Six months ago, three of the home's communal areas were transformed via the installation of glass atriums exhibiting colourful pieces, welcoming residents and family members for chats, activities or some quiet time.

One of those spaces was the Mornington home's art room, which now evokes a French impressionist theme, thanks to the installation of works by 19th and 20th century artist Claude Monet.

At Bendigo's Kangaroo Flat residential aged care home, residents are now being treated to a large rectangular-shaped photographic mural in the dining hall. The image depicts the famed Queen Victoria statue and surrounding landmark buildings in the middle of Bendigo.

Benetas General Manager Strategy, Infrastructure and Housing Bruce Webb said each site featured a range of artistic activities, not simply because they were enjoyable but because they helped engage and bond residents.

"We know how important creative outlets are to people, especially as they get older looking for new ways to express themselves," Mr Webb said.

"Benetas is extremely proud of the artistic community we've created, from a weekly activity to an exhibition that draws people from the broader community each year."

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Growing the conversation around positive ageing

Bolton Clarke survey highlights priority areas for policy makers and providers

Staying physically healthy and maintaining beneficial relationships are the top two ageing well priorities for Australians, according to early data from Bolton Clarke's *Ageing Well Report 2024*.

The report – based on a national survey taken in July with 2,005 Australians across six age cohorts from 25-34 to 75-plus – also finds having more choice about work, more time to focus on wellbeing, and more time to spend with friends and family, are the top things people are looking forward to about ageing across all age groups.

Conversely, people most fear losing their physical health, with loss of independence the second biggest concern for those aged over 65 – highlighting critical priority areas for governments and providers.

A staggering 68 per cent of respondents, including a majority in every age group and 78 per cent of respondents over 55, believe Australia is not well equipped to deal with an ageing population.

The data – part of the organisation's campaign to encourage people to think positively about ageing – will further inform the not-for-profit provider's work to broaden the conversation on what ageing means in Australia and how to meet the changing needs of an ageing population.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety found “as we age, we progressively shift our focus from work to other things that give us purpose and joy...yet... as a nation Australia has drifted into an ageist mindset that undervalues older people and limits their possibilities”.

Bolton Clarke Group CEO Stephen Muggleton said it's important to listen to what Australians are saying about ageing

to identify areas for improvement, as well as challenge the ageist stereotype.

“The Commission found that making positive change begins with changing how we think, but over the past decade there's been a focus on the negative aspects of growing older and this does little to help people plan ahead for how they're going to keep living well,” he said.

“We're hoping to challenge some of those limitations and get people thinking about ageing more positively.

“Australians are living longer and ageing better – our life expectancy is the fourth highest in the world and on average, Australians born today can expect to live well into their 80s and to be healthier and more active into older age.

“But prevailing attitudes overwhelmingly label older people with negative stereotypes and dismiss active, engaged seniors as an unrepresentative anomaly to be ignored.

“It's time to turn the tables and remind people that ageing is just another word for living and that getting older is still compatible with doing the things you enjoy, learning new things and contributing to your community.”

Bolton Clarke's campaign comes after an announcement earlier this year that the Group's former Allity, McKenzie Aged Care Group and Acacia Living Group operations and teams would come together under the Bolton Clarke name.

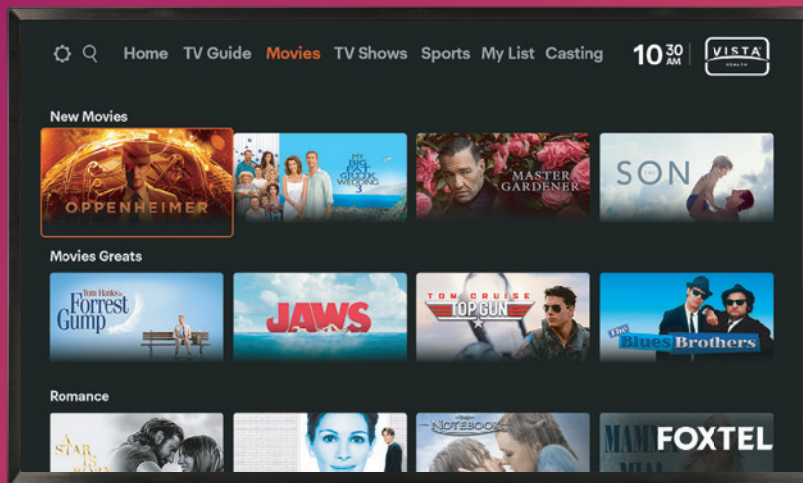
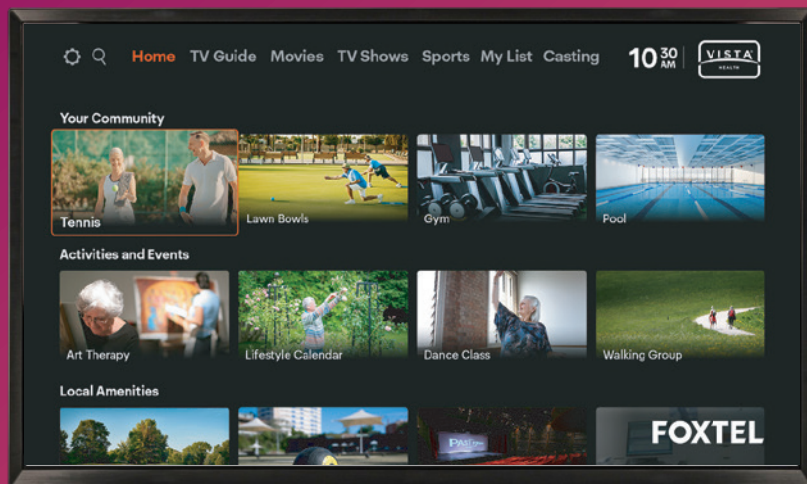
The Group's growth is about creating connected care and living options focused on helping people age well.

**Kirsty Stein, Media and External Relations Manager,
Bolton Clarke
boltonclarke.com.au**

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Supporting ageing Australians in Northern Territory communities

Health professionals willing to take on the challenge of remote work

We know healthcare options in rural and remote parts of Australia can be limited, particularly when it comes to specialist services like aged care. This is why it's so important to address this shortage and ensure equitable access to care Australia-wide.

Through our tier one supplier status with the Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS), Sanctuary Recruitment is proud to provide healthcare professionals on short-term contract placements in rural and remote areas of the Northern Territory.

Founded in 2014, the ARRCS that aims to deliver high quality aged care, childcare and regional home care services to those in need in the Northern Territory and beyond.

Their aged care residences span from Darwin to Kaltukatjara (Docker River), and they take pride in providing a holistic approach to care, consistently maintaining a deep-rooted respect for all Elders and Aboriginal cultures.

Working side-by-side with ARRCS has allowed us to appreciate the breadth of their programs, which hold the values of compassion, respect, justice, teamwork and learning in everything they do.

Our nursing team, from assistants in nursing (AINs) through to nurse managers, regularly undertake contract assignments with ARRCS, often extending their initial placement duration and requesting to return to their home locations to provide support to their communities of origin.

Amanda, one of our AINs who has been working with ARRCS for the last two years, was initially hesitant to travel to remote locations. Now, her preference is to work with Indigenous communities.

"It was a challenge to start, with lots to learn. It didn't take me long to build up rapport with the residents, and they are friendly and protective of me now, which gives me a warm feeling of family," said Amanda.

We observed NAIDOC week 7-14 July, recognising the history and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and inviting our staff to learn more about Indigenous history.



Naresh during his contract assignment with ARRCS Old Timers in Alice Springs.

During these celebrations, Amanda learned about First Nation traditions at her placement in Alice Springs.

"I spent time with the residents learning how to cook kangaroo tail and damper, a type of bread cooked over the fire.

"Getting to know the community on a personal level allows for our friendship to run deeper.

"Each day is different, and the relationships that I get to form showcases the rewarding nature of being part of the aged care industry."

At the core of their services is the belief that all Elders deserve proper care, encouraging everyone to live life in all its fullness.

Naresh, who first started working with ARRCS in 2022, describes his time with the residents as full of learning and sharing.

"Every day I come away with having learnt something new. I know the residents really well now and I'm always happy to go back to any of the ARRCS homes," he said.

"We spend our time together sharing stories and cultural traditions. I now know traditional songs and sing with them."

Naresh has worked across the country but always favours returning to ARRCS.

"I have always found ARRCS really supportive. I feel so comfortable working with their management and have found that this is a trait that runs throughout their organization," he said.

"Both the clinical and non-clinical teams are very welcoming and are happy to give me the orientation that I need to set me up for success."

We are proud to be tier one suppliers to an organisation that keeps inclusion, diversity and passion as part of its fundamentals.

Together, we can provide care and support to older Australians across the country that they need, want and deserve.

Nadia Bouzenada, Marketing Generalist,
Sanctuary Recruitment
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Care finder program for vulnerable older Australians

Helping disadvantaged older Australians navigate aged care and community-based supports

On 1 January 2023, the Australian Government established the care finder program, commissioned through the 31 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) to support older people with complex needs understand and navigate Australia's aged care system.

Since its inception, the program is having a positive impact on the lives of older people who could otherwise fall through the cracks of health and community service systems.

Key issues affecting care finder's target population include homelessness, housing insecurity, social isolation, financial disadvantage and a lack of service availability in some areas.

Footprints Community is a major provider of care finder services in Australia and earlier this year proudly celebrated its first anniversary of delivering the program across seven PHN regions from northern Queensland (in partnership with Better Together) to northern New South Wales, including metropolitan through to very remote areas of Queensland.

During this time, Footprints Community recruited and trained over 50 specialist team members to deliver the care finder service to over 2,000 people. The average age of their care finder clients is 76 years with some as young as 56 or as old as 97 years.

Many of the service referrals have been for aged care, but Footprints Community are also seeing high numbers of referrals for housing and homelessness services, community social support and health services.

The first evaluation report on the implementation of the care finder program released in May 2024 found that the "program is on track to deliver its short-term outcomes and has strong support from care finders, PHNs, intermediaries and clients".

Footprints Community CEO Cherylee Treloar acknowledged the importance of the care finder service because it engages older people at a point in their lives where they are becoming more vulnerable and frailer.

"The difficulties for older people heighten regarding the barriers for housing, income and engagement. This service ensures they are not isolated and are able to overcome challenges with care finder assistance and support," said Cherylee.

Assertive outreach is a key feature of the care finder program. It recognises the need to actively reach out and connect with target populations directly within communities and through



intermediary organisations that can identify people in need of intensive navigational support and facilitate referrals to the care finder service.

In the first year of operation, Footprints completed almost 7,000 hours of assertive outreach, engaging with communities, health providers, homelessness services, aged care and disability providers and local community groups.

Cathy Pilecki, Senior Manager of the Care Finder Program, highlighted the wide range of backgrounds their clients come from, often with highly complex physical, mental health, social and communication challenges.

"A significant number of our clients have experienced trauma in their lives, affecting their emotions and relationships with others," said Cathy.

"We have skilled and resourceful staff who deliver services embedded in a trauma-informed approach and can link clients to a wide range of services and support."

The PHNs play a key role in raising awareness of the program with hospital and primary care services, as well as monitoring program outcomes and supporting the performance of care finder organisations through regular community of practice meetings.

Footprints Community values the opportunity to work with PHNs and the network of care finder organisations.

In addition to the care finder program, a dedicated First Nations navigation service called Elder Care Support is being rolled out through the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

Footprints Community
footprintscommunity.org.au/services/care-finder

Visit footprintscommunity.org.au/services/care-finder to connect with a Footprints care finder.

Visit myagedcare.gov.au/help-care-finder to access information about all care finder services across Australia.





How to provide LGBTI inclusive aged care

Ensuring everyone feels welcome is vital

Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) adults encounter significant barriers when accessing the Australian aged care system.

After a lifetime of facing unwelcoming and non-inclusive services, past discrimination can make them reluctant to seek care and receive the support they need.

The social isolation experienced by many older Australians is even more significant for older LGBTI people due to factors such as rejection by biological family and lower rates of having children.

LGBTI people often rely on informal social support structures, including what is sometimes referred to as 'family of choice'. Some supports may have broken down due to death or illness, and their family of choice may not be recognised by care services.

When older LGBTI people seek care, it can be an isolating experience. They can be less inclined to disclose personal information to staff and other residents due to fear of discrimination. Aged care providers do not always understand their needs and there are few LGBTI-specific services available.

Considering the importance of their unique social support systems, providing ways for LGBTI people to sustain connection to their communities is a core component of culturally safe and appropriate aged care for LGBTI people.

The Aged Care Quality Standards and Charter of Aged Care Rights (requirement 3a) states that "everyone receiving government-funded aged care is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, and to have their identity, culture, and diversity valued."

It's important to provide care that is truly inclusive to ensure that older LGBTI people are supported in an environment where their diversity is recognised and valued.

Become a verified provider

Recent initiatives aimed at addressing issues faced by special needs groups in aged care include the Australian Government's Specialisation Verification Framework, developed to ensure older people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences can access more reliable information when choosing aged care providers.

The framework allows aged care providers to demonstrate and develop their inclusive services, while also helping older people identify verified providers on My Aged Care that offer specialised care for people with diverse backgrounds.

It was developed in response to recommendations by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety that providers must validate claims of expertise in supporting special needs populations, with nine special needs groups or focus populations recognised in the framework and listed in the *Aged Care Act*, including LGBTI older people.

Unfortunately, there has been limited uptake of this initiative in the sector for LGBTI specialisation. While there is certainly training fatigue that comes with evolving industry requirements, obtaining a specialist verification in delivering care to LGBTI older people is crucial to high-quality service provision.

For organisations working to be more inclusive of diverse communities, they can now apply to independently verify their services against the My Aged Care Provider Specialisation Verification Framework.

Find out more here: health.gov.au/topics/aged-care/providing-aged-care-services/reporting/specialisation-verification-framework

Get the right training

Take steps towards providing safer and more culturally appropriate care by completing LGBTIQ+ Health Australia's Silver Rainbow Training to learn how to better support LGBTI older people.

Through this project, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia educates service providers, policy makers, LGBTI people and the general community about how to meet the needs of LGBTI older people.

Help create a more inclusive and respectful aged care environment and drive positive change for greater respect and inclusion.

Together we are working to ensure aged care services are inclusive of diverse sexual orientation, relationships, gender and bodies, of older Australians.

Access the training here: lgbtiqhealth.org.au/silver-rainbow-training

Other ways to provide inclusive care

For providers interested in providing a more culturally safe and inclusive environment but unsure where to begin, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia has compiled the following 'top tips'.

Contact local LGBTI community organisations for diversity and inclusion training. Many of LGBTIQ+ Health Australia's full members provide training and professional development in working with older LGBTI people in their local regions throughout Australia. Find local training providers here: lgbtiqhealth.org.au/member_training_courses

Use inclusive language. Words can make a world of difference in ensuring LGBTI older people feel safe and included in aged care. For example, ask if they would like to be referred to with certain pronouns or ask about their 'partner' instead of assuming they have a husband or wife.

Foster ongoing connections. Recognise the unique informal support networks in LGBTI communities and foster ongoing connections with their family of choice, communities and people who are important to them.

Respect privacy. If an older LGBTI person confides in you, ensure you ask their permission before sharing their information with others, such as patients, residents or staff members.

Nicky Bath, Chief Executive Officer,
LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
lgbtiqhealth.org.au/silver-rainbow-training



LGBTIQ+ Health Australia

Support for inclusive care for LGBTI older people



SILVER RAINBOW

Silver Rainbow

Silver Rainbow training is provided nationally by LGBTIQ+ Health Australia and provides workforce training and support to adopt LGBTI inclusive policies and practices.

Silver Rainbow is funded by the Department of Health & Aged Care.
For enquiries, contact: education@lgbtiqhealth.org.au

National LGBTI Older Persons' Advocacy Network

The network provides a voice for LGBTI older people, including those who are vulnerable or have diverse life experiences. It supports them to participate in dialogue about aged care policy, programs, and services.



lgbtiqhealth.org.au/subscribe-network



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Maximising social connections in residential aged care

Why a strengths-based approach is best

When it comes to healthy ageing, social connections play a crucial role, and for older adults transitioning into residential care, the risk of social isolation and its impact on cognitive function cannot be ignored.

A 2022 survey by Australian Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia shows one-third of older adults living in residential aged care feel socially isolated, with significant and long-term negative impacts on health and wellbeing.

This is a concerning statistic because we know that social engagement, friendship and companionship are associated with improved mood, better cognition and reduced dementia risk.

In both residential and community aged care settings, activity attendance is a key indicator of social participation. These programs include activities like group outings, arts and crafts sessions, music therapy and reminiscence activities.

However, despite the vital role these programs play in driving interaction and building a sense of community, they have varying degrees of success – particularly in residential care.

For example, Enrich Living Services' 'Community Connections' program improved social connections and quality of life for clients accessing community care through outings like ice skating, motorcycle rides and social gatherings. Increased happiness and a renewed sense of belonging were key highlights of the program's success in promoting personal wellbeing.

One participant shared, "I sort of went into my shell for 10 years. I wouldn't go out, I didn't go anywhere. ... Now, I started going out... And now I feel like my old self again."

However, in residential aged care homes there are challenges in ensuring widespread and consistent access to meaningful social activities. Limited resources, staffing issues, inconsistent paperwork and differences in levels of resident participation mean we don't always know if these social programs are beneficial.

To find out more, we took a closer look at the impact of activities in aged care homes on resident quality of life, cognition and social networks.

Our study involved interviews with 96 residents in New South Wales. It explored activities that residents attended in

the previous month and categorised them into four types: cognitive, physical, social and personal interest.

What was interesting is the activities provided were not directly related to residents' quality of life or cognitive function.

Rather, we found that regardless of the activities attended, the most significant determinant of cognition level was the degree of social connectedness; residents with extensive family and friendship connections had better cognition.

This observation suggests that informal interactions outside of structured activities, such as conversations in corridors, with family outside the home or during personal care, may be better at preserving social and cognitive health.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety put forward several recommendations targeting social connectivity within aged care homes, advocating for a specific social supports category in service provision.

Going forward, aged care homes should seek to embed a strengths-based approach in their social support programs. This means celebrating uniqueness, focusing on who the person is, their values, what they do best, and what resources are already available that help them thrive despite their physical or mental condition.

Practically, in terms of activity provision, the earlier the residents are involved in recreational activity planning and delivery, the better. This would help ensure individual preferences, physical abilities (e.g. cognitive, visual or hearing impairments) and personalities are appreciated and valued.

Outside these activities, making the most of natural interactions that occur within common living spaces or personal care delivery is key.

Simple, everyday conversations about residents' past experiences and how they shape their day-to-day life can be integral in promoting cognitive health and wellbeing.

Offering training or creating a cheat sheet of strengths-based conversation phrases, topics and open and inclusive body language that staff can implement during routine care practices may be a good starting point.

Ms Laura Dodds, PhD Candidate, and Associate Professor Joyce Siette, Lead, Brain Health Hub, Western Sydney University
brainhealthhub.com.au



Executive study tour to France

Key learnings set to impact aged care at Goodwin

In July this year, a group of aged care executives from Australia took a Studying and Advancing Global Eldercare (SAGE) Tour to France's Bordeaux region to explore innovative aged care models across residential care, home care and retirement living.

"Being a small group meant we weren't intrusive, we just blended in wherever we went, which allowed us to get a better feel for each location and also gave us lots of opportunities to ask questions," said tour participant Canberra-based Tamra MacLeod, who is the Executive Manager of Clinical and Health Care services at Goodwin Aged Care Services.

Tamra joined the tour along with her colleague Jamie Fillingham, who is Goodwin's Executive Manager of Home Care and Business Transformation.

For both of them, the highlight of the nine-day study tour was the Alzheimer Village known as Landais in Dax in southern France, which is pioneering best-practice and evidence-based dementia care.

This specialised community provides a comprehensive and supportive environment for people living with Alzheimer's disease, focusing on enhancing their quality of life through a person-centred approach.

All of the residents must have a confirmed diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease as the site is closely tied with research, to learn more about best-practice dementia care.

Based on the De Hogeweyk concept – the world's first dementia village in the Netherlands – Landais is designed to represent a typical French town complete with a mini-mart, coffee shop, restaurant, library open to the surrounding villages, hairdresser, small farm and village spaces.

Set on five hectares with abundant green spaces, the innovative architectural design creates interest within the village and while it is fenced for the safety of the high-needs and vulnerable residents, the barrier is disguised with vegetation and the space feels like an extension of the external community.

"What's most interesting about it is the concept of independence as a way of life. In many cases, you couldn't tell who was a staff member and who was a resident," said Jamie.

"And everything was very simple, as you'd expect in a normal residential area or in a regular home."

Tamra agreed, noting the difference with Australia's aged care offerings, which can sometimes feel more like a hotel.

"Nothing was overly curated, furniture and crockery were mismatched, there were chairs of different heights and couches for lounging, people could relax just as you would at home," she said.

"The bedrooms were intentionally very simple, with no televisions or fridges and no space to sit all day, to make it clear they are for sleeping and resting only."

At Landais, there are 105 permanent residents who are called 'villagers' as well as seven beds for temporary respite and a day program for people with Alzheimers. Households are comprised of eight people with four houses in a 'neighbourhood' surrounding one small house with windows all around, which is where the staff are able to conduct business and monitor the villagers in a discreet way.

"Villagers are free to do as they wish, they were allowed to pull plants out of the ground if they wanted, they were given freedom to use their homes as they wanted, they were under



Villagers attend the Landais mini-mart daily to purchase groceries for their households.



Landais is designed to look like a typical village in France's Dax.

the supervision of staff but it was very discreet and there was a sense of total freedom,” said Tamra.

“Staff monitored the villagers overnight from the internal ‘homes’ using technology installed in the homes, but let normal life go on without providing assistance unless it was required.

“This was the same with the outdoors, staff would stop and chat with villagers and only intervene in an activity if the resident was moving towards the exit.

“The philosophy was very much about enabling the villagers through the model of care and the physical environment.

“The upshot of this was we saw no behavioural issues at all, despite many of the villagers clearly exhibiting advanced disease.”

While all meals are prepared in the village restaurant, villagers prepare the accompaniments like salads in their own kitchens. Every morning the villagers who wish to go to the shop are accompanied by staff members to purchase goods required for their household for that day (things like bread, milk and fresh fruit and vegetables).

This concept of supported independence translated to retirement villages, too.

“In France, when you enter a retirement village you select the package of support you require, which can include daily meals and laundry through to just house cleaning once a week, with all services on-site,” said Jamie.

“Because aged care and healthcare are funded through the one stream – the health budget – in France, there are more opportunities for psychological and allied health support.



Delegates from the SAGE study tour pictured with representatives from the Partage & Vie Foundation (a French non-profit organisation managing care facilities for the elderly and disabled, focused on providing quality care and personalized support with an ethical approach) along with the Deputy Mayor of Gujan-Mestras commune (second from right).

“Mental health is a big focus in aged care, and it’s a lot more accessible than in Australia, so there’s a lot more support from psychiatrists, psychologists and counsellors than we are able to get here.”

While adopting some actions would need significant changes like new builds, the big take-home that Goodwin plans to apply in its operations, is mindset.

“In France, they are focused on what they call ‘animation’,” said Tamra.

“It’s all about animating wellbeing and lifestyle, by creating a culture of independence with only the minimum supports required, rather than being overbearing with excessive interventions – their concept of ‘dignity of risk’ is something we can absolutely learn from.

“Nature is really important. In Australia we might have beautiful courtyards, but the door is locked for what we consider resident safety. In France, they have big expanses of garden space and no limits on accessing it.

“It’s also about keeping things simple, focusing on the person and creating a feeling of home, rather than aiming for an award-winning interior design for a marketing brochure.

“And community engagement is vital, not just within a village or aged care home, but also with the people surrounding it, who are invited to engage with older people through real shops, theatres and cafés where everyone is welcome and true community spirit is created.”

Judy Martin, SAGE Executive Lead at Anchor Excellence (owner of the SAGE program) said, “SAGE study tours offer our industry executives first-hand insights into innovative best-practice models of aged care, from different cultures and countries, which we can bring back home.

“The knowledge gained and relationships built between colleagues contributes to the ongoing dialogue we are having in Australia about what best-practice aged care can look like.”

In the past year alone, over 50 aged care executives from ACCPA member organisations have participated in a SAGE program. The 2025 programs are currently in the planning phase, set for Japan and Canada.

Linda Baracioli,
Aged Care Today Editor and Communications Advisor,
Aged & Community Care Providers Association
anchorexcellence.com/sage-tours

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Why Australia's immigration policy needs to change

The regions can't wait

Australian immigration policy is a powerful political tool, with public opinion shaped by the media and rhetoric, yet it has had a profound impact on Australia's identity and is a vital part of our workforce.

It is clear Australia must continue to embrace immigration, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic caused a skills crisis when half a million temporary migrants left our shores.

This highlighted the role migrant workers play in aged care, where more than 30 per cent of staff are born overseas.

In 2021, the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) warned of a shortage of at least 110,000 direct aged care workers in the coming decade – including personal care assistants, registered nurses and allied healthcare staff – with regional areas to be impacted the most.

Despite government initiatives such as the Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement and Designated Area Migration Agreements (DAMAs) specific to a few remote regions, the occupation coverage or location of these programs is limited and the process is bureaucratically cumbersome for employers.

The Subclass 494 visa offered in November 2019 as the solution to regional Australia's skill shortages is generally proving a failure due to its complexity and high cost, and offers few incentives for migrants to select this visa over other skilled visa options related to metropolitan areas.

In FY2023 there were only 7,004 places approved in this program, which represented a drop in numbers from FY2018 when there were 8,987 places approved through the previous Regional Employer Sponsorship Scheme.

In June 2024, the Australian Government invited feedback on their discussion paper *Supporting Strong and Sustainable Communities*. In response, the Migration Institute of Australia (MIA) made 12 key recommendations for reform of the migration program to support the regions.

As a specialist in immigration law accredited by the Law Institute of Victoria, I am a member of the MIA's Regional Migration Advisory Committee and wholeheartedly support these recommendations – many of which are reflective of reforms the migration industry has been putting to the government for the past decade.

Adoption of these proposed reforms will go a long way to facilitating the movement of migrant workers to the regions.

MIA's recommendations for regional visa reform

1. The visa requirements for the Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional be more closely aligned with those of the Temporary Skills Shortage visa.
2. The use of the Regional Occupation List (ROL) to determine regional occupations eligible for employer sponsorship or state and territory nomination be abandoned.
3. Occupations eligible for Regional Employer-Sponsorship or state and territory nomination be all those classified as ANZSCO Skill levels one to three.
4. The requirement for formal skills assessment for Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional visas be aligned with those occupations requiring skills assessment in the current Temporary Skills Shortage subclass.
5. The age threshold for the Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional visa stream be increased to under 50 years at time of application (currently the age limit is under 45).
6. The threshold work experience requirement for the Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional visa stream be aligned with that of the current Temporary Skills Shortage subclass (a reduction from three years down to one year effective November 2024).
7. A regional 10 per cent reduction in the Temporary Skilled Migration Income Threshold be applied to the Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional visa subclass.
8. The requirement for certification of the local Annual Market Salary Rate by Regional Certifying Bodies be removed.
9. Any review of the Skilling Australians Fund levy considers the burden this charge imposes on regional employers.
10. The refund policies associated with the Skilling Australians Fund levy be reviewed for procedural fairness to the business sponsors.
11. Labour market testing requirement be removed for Category 3 regional areas.
12. The definition of regional area be aligned across all areas of government to better meet the needs of these communities.

Beyond that, the real challenge lies in how to ensure our migrant workers feel welcome and supported in their need for housing and community services, as well as incentivised to migrate and remain in the regions long-term.

We look forward to the Australian Government's proposed plan to support our regional communities, because the right supports will be critical for essential services like aged care.

Sarah Loch-Wilkinson, Solicitor, Visa Executive
visaexecutive.com

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Leveraging alternate visa programs

An international workforce solution

The skills shortage in the aged care services industry is a matter of public record, posing significant challenges to the delivery of quality care for older Australians.

Sourcing labour from overseas has long been a solution for aged care providers in this country – and now there are several pathways available to sponsor individuals for temporary visas in Australia, some with the option of permanent residency.

It's important aged care providers understand all available options, and how they can be used for different cohorts of individuals to attract and retain migrant workers.

By incorporating international recruitment into workforce planning, providers can access diverse talent pools and maintain delivery of quality care, as well as access workers with native language skills that may enhance culturally appropriate care.

In this article, we've outlined the key pathways you can leverage to boost your workforce.

Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement (ACILA)

The ACILA is a sponsorship agreement that is individually negotiated between an employer and the Australian Government.

It offers aged care providers access to concessions to standard requirements such as English, skills and minimum salary threshold, and a pathway to permanent residence where the individual has at least two years of relevant direct care experience in Australia.

To gain access to an ACILA, aged care providers must first enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the relevant industry union(s) before submitting their labour agreement request with the Department of Home Affairs.

Once the ACILA is approved, the employer can sponsor migrant workers via the Temporary Skill Shortage (subclass 482) (TSS) or Employer Nomination Scheme (subclass 186)

(ENS) visa programs to work in direct care occupations such as nursing support worker, personal care assistant and aged or disability carer.

Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA)

DAMAs work in a similar way to the ACILA except they are location based (i.e. for employers in a particular region of Australia).

There is no requirement to enter into an MoU with the union, instead the employer must apply to the regional authority administering the DAMA for endorsement first, before applying to the Department of Home Affairs for a Labour Agreement.

Once approved, the DAMA also enables an aged care provider to sponsor for TSS, ENS and/or Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (subclass 494) (SESR) visas. A list of current DAMAs can be found on the Department of Home Affairs website.

Skilled Refugee Labour Agreement Pilot

This type of labour agreement provides skilled refugees and displaced people with a pathway, in addition to humanitarian resettlement, to live and work in Australia.

Extended to 30 June 2025, the scheme mirrors the DAMA requirements in that endorsement from Talent Beyond Boundaries is required before a labour agreement request can be submitted.

There are also additional concessions to standard requirements to reduce barriers faced by skilled refugees and displaced people when trying to access skilled visas, such as a waiver of skills assessment requirements, reduced English language requirements, reduced age limit for permanent residency and other flexible processing arrangements.

Training (subclass 407) visa program

The training visa is an employer sponsored temporary visa which allows an individual to take part in workplace-based training to upskill and become

accustomed to, or enhance their skills in the aged care environment in Australia.

The program offers three streams, depending on the individual's circumstances, the purpose and intent of the training, as well as considerations such as role, qualifications, experience and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) registration status.

These three streams are:

- occupational training required for registration
- occupational training to improve skills in an eligible occupation
- occupational training for capacity building overseas.

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme

The PALM scheme enables employers to sponsor individuals from the Pacific Islands and Timor-Leste for a temporary visa to work in certain areas of regional Australia, and is not only limited to those in direct care but can also extend to other ancillary roles.

Providers will need to first apply to become a PALM scheme approved employer and then enter into a Deed of Agreement with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

A Temporary Activities Sponsorship will also need to be applied for in order to be able to sponsor workers for a Temporary Work (International Relations) (subclass 403) visa.

Find your solution

Being able to leverage all available immigration programs can help providers address the skills shortage in the aged care sector in terms of attraction and retention.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to explore your options or would like assistance in optimising your recruitment and workforce strategy.

Arinta Wanich, Associate, and Charles Johanes, Partner, Fragomen
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- Our interim management and clinical management services provides a solution that allows providers to focus on recruitment without pressure to “fill a role”.
- Care Planning and Assessment services can provide you with experienced RN resources to rectify identified gaps, whilst transferring sustainable skills and processes to your team.
- Additionally, these services can be used to provide coaching, and mentoring should you identify a team member who needs support to step into a more senior role, or who has skills gained in a non-aged care setting.



Phone 1300 413 911
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Filling the workforce gap in regional Queensland

Overseas nursing recruits find a warm welcome and a new home

Lutheran Services, a leading Queensland not-for-profit aged care and community service provider, is supporting experienced aged care nurses with visa sponsorship, a full-time position in regional areas and access to a two-year pathway to permanent residency.

Operating for 18 months, the program has employed 10 registered nurses (RNs) with another six in the pipeline. The new recruits have been placed at Wahroonga in Biloela in central Queensland, Cooina in Gympie in the Greater Sunshine Coast and Orana in Kingaroy in the South Burnett Region.

Originally using recruitment companies, word-of-mouth referrals are growing as friends back home learn of the supportive welcome the nurses receive.

Lutheran Services CEO Nick Ryan said the new workers were critical to addressing ongoing workforce shortages.

"We're delighted to support aged care workers who are willing to travel to Queensland and be part of a workforce that cares for older people in our regional communities," Nick said.

"We remain resolute in maintaining a dedicated, growing workforce to fill skill shortages while addressing the cost of living pressures many are facing."

The two RNs who have been placed in the small town of Biloela are originally from India and have moved with their families where they have been welcomed with open arms. Another three RNs are expected in the next few months.

The manager and staff of Biloela's Wahroonga Aged Care took great care to source and furnish homes for the new

arrivals as well as stock cupboards and pantries, providing sheets and towels and even putting teddy bears on the beds for the children.

Shiha Cleetus has happily settled into life in Biloela, 570km northwest of Brisbane, and her work at Wahroonga.

After training as an RN and working in hospitals in Kerala in Southern India, Shiha moved to Ireland to work in aged care when she saw a recruitment advert for the role in central Queensland.

"I arrived in Biloela in February this year with my husband and two children, aged six and four, after a very long journey with only our carry-on luggage after our bags were misplaced by the airline," Shiha said.

"The house had been prepared by the Wahroonga team with everything we needed including groceries, and books and colouring-in pencils for the children. We were so thankful."

Shiha's husband found work in Biloela as a chef and the children are settled into school and kindergarten.

"Wahroonga's manager Donelle Kralovic is so supportive. I have never met anyone in my work life as supportive," she said.

"There have been some challenges transitioning to a new country and new workplace but the whole team at Lutheran Services made it easier. I am so happy to be here."

RN Harsha Varghese arrived in Biloela in May and like Shiha had completed her nursing studies in Southern India before working in hospitals and aged care in Ireland.

Harsha's husband is employed at Wahroonga as a personal carer and their daughter, six, has settled into the local school.



Wahroonga Lutheran Services nurse recruits Harsha Varghese (left) and Shiha Cleetus.

"Our home had been arranged with everything we needed. We are so happy because we have been made to feel so welcome by all the staff and residents at Wahroonga and the people of Biloela," she said.

Wahroonga Aged Care Manager Donelle Kralovic said the program has been very successful.

"Both Shiha and Harsha hit the ground running and have integrated well into the community. The other staff and residents love them," she said.

"The recruits have been exactly what we needed, bringing to our team high levels of clinical skills and experience in aged care.

"The staff and I really go out of our way to make the new nurses and their families feel welcome and appreciated. It all helps to make an easy transition.

"It's the little things that matter like having bread and milk in the fridge and fruit on the bench. We do live by our values of care and support.

"While it's always a challenge in rural and remote areas to recruit and retain good staff, this program is working well. With support to assimilate into the community we hope the nurses will make Biloela their long-term home."

Lutheran Services
lutheranservices.org.au

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Building strong leaders in aged care

A targeted approach is best

Laura Sutherland (presenting) says building strong leaders is critical in aged care.

Leadership is vital in the aged and community care sectors, significantly influencing culture, performance and care quality, however there are considerable leadership gaps, particularly in prioritising self-care, having difficult conversations, resolving conflict, addressing poor performance and managing change.

These gaps present opportunities for a targeted approach to leadership development. With a more streamlined and higher impact strategy, organisations can enhance overall leadership effectiveness.

Current leadership gaps in aged and community care

Recent research (*Care Industry Leadership Capability Assessment*, CILCA 2023) reveals aged care leaders are eager to learn, and actively care about the wellbeing and safety of others, while having an ability to build strong rapport with families is crucial for achieving the best care outcomes.

It also highlights skills gaps. The three domains from the Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework in which leaders across the sector experience the largest gaps are (in order): 'Leading Others', 'Leading Change', and 'Leading Self'.

Key areas for development within these domains include:

- practicing self-care
- managing team conflict effectively

- effectively dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- shares responsibility effectively
- providing clear feedback
- addressing challenging situations effectively
- effectively manages time
- actively identifies strategic opportunities
- turns creative ideas into reality
- setting realistic goals and objectives that deliver consistent outcomes.

Consequences of poor leadership

The stakes are high in aged care. Gaps in leadership capability directly contribute to increased staff turnover, leading to costly recruitment and training processes.

They can also disrupt continuity of care and create strained relationships within the workplace.

A lack of leadership leaves staff feeling neglected, unappreciated and unsure of their roles, reducing motivation and innovation, and ultimately impacting organisational culture, safety and performance.

From recognising gaps to bridging them

To address these leadership gaps, organisations need streamlined programs specifically designed to equip leaders with the necessary skills, knowledge and tools they need.

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Generic leadership programs are insufficient; instead, data-driven, evidenced-based, targeted initiatives to address gaps within an individual organisation yield the best results.

Targeted leadership development leads to the most significant improvements in team engagement, organisational performance, staff retention and quality of care.

By building the right capabilities today, organisations help ensure their leaders are better equipped to effectively manage and implement inevitable and ongoing change – such as the changes required by the new Aged Care Act and strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards – propelling the organisation forward, and future proofing for tomorrow.

Proven results from targeted programs

We have seen transformations in teams and organisations that have proactively engaged with targeted programs to address the identified leadership gaps through best-practice frameworks, data-driven insights, expert consultancy, one-on-one and group coaching, and practical applications.

This comprehensive approach ensures that leaders not only learn new skills but also apply them in their daily work environments.

The CEO at one of our client organisations, Coolibah Care, highlights how profound the impact can be.

The organisation engaged Above & Beyond to work with a group of their Registered Nurses (RNs) over a four-month period, to support their development and enhance their skills.

“We recognised that our RNs needed the skills to lead their care team to optimise the safety and care of themselves, their team and our residents,” said Amanda Crook, Coolibah Care CEO.

“Our RNs now report improved abilities to handle difficult conversations, manage arising challenges and issues without escalating to more senior managers, and the importance of communication when leading their teams.

“We are looking forward to seeing these leaders utilise and grow in confidence with their new skills and the positive impact it will have on care.”

Future ready

The aged care sector is at a pivotal point, and by addressing the uncovered leadership challenges, organisations can drive meaningful change in their operations – influencing care quality, staff turnover and organisational success.

For more detailed information on Above & Beyond's leadership programs, and how they can be adapted for different levels of leadership within your organisation, please reach out to us.

Together, we can build stronger leaders for now and the future.

Laura Sutherland, Founder, Above & Beyond Group
aboveandbeyondgroup.com.au



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Closing workforce competency gaps

The key to uplifting care and retaining staff

It's an exciting time to be in aged care right now. We know there are many challenges, but they also come with great opportunities for aged care workers, with new career paths and greater investment in learning and development.

The challenge

Australia's aged care services industry faces an urgent workforce and skills gap shortage. With our elderly population set to double by 2057, the Australian Government estimates an additional 200,000 care workers will be needed.

Current shortages mean aged care providers are struggling with high turnover and recruiting qualified staff. This is not just a staffing issue; it's a skills crisis.

Collaborating to cultivate skilled workers

Change is underway through our collective efforts, but it's only the beginning. Here are some ways we are driving a skilled aged care workforce:

- **Government initiatives.** The Department of Health and Aged Care is boosting training with initiatives such as fee free TAFE courses, additional training opportunities, and scholarships for nurses and personal care workers.
- **Mandatory education.** The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety introduced new standards around ongoing education necessary to prepare staff for caregiving complexities, ensuring they are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills.
- **Industry support.** Providers such as Meditrax play a vital role in delivering training, guidance and best-practice operating advice to uplift the entire industry.

- **Supportive work environments.** Providers are playing a role by creating more supportive work environments that meet the needs of their staff, address skills gaps and ultimately lead to better care outcomes.

Investment in continuous learning

We often spend a lot of time and effort to recruit the right people but forget to focus on what we can do to keep them.

High turnover rates often stem from burnout and lack of career progression, but ongoing education can help address these challenges.

Workers who feel supported in their professional development are more likely to stay, leading to a stable and experienced workforce.

Empower your teams with knowledge. Give them access to nationally recognised training programs and you'll see positive impacts on growth, loyalty and career progression.

Continuous education enhances skills, boosts confidence, and enables high-quality care, while continued learning fosters a culture where staff feel valued and empowered, which is especially important if you want to attract and retain the best talent in aged care.

Considerations for training offerings

When considering training opportunities for your staff, there are some elements that might be more effective for your situation than others.

More engaged, educated staff leads to higher retention rates, happier teams and improved resident care, which benefits everyone in the industry.

Flexible, accessible, relevant, accredited training is not only essential but expected.

A hybrid learning approach – combining online and face-to-face training – meets

diverse workforce needs, including language barriers, time pressures and studying confidence.

Consider customised training at your site and versatile delivery options to fit into the work schedules of your team members.

Also think about targeted training for different groups of team members, such as leaders and direct care workers.

It's never been easier to address skill gaps

It's a good idea to start with a comprehensive review of your current training offers, so you can make informed decisions about your greatest areas of need and risk, and identify the programs that will provide the most cost-effective benefits:

- **Step 1.** Review current training programs.
- **Step 2.** Evaluate how training is accessed and delivered.
- **Step 3.** Check your training covers all the compliance elements.
- **Step 4.** Evaluate training effectiveness. What is the feedback and what are the benefits? How is it impacting care?

You should then develop a plan for training that addresses the gaps, which should be reviewed on an annual basis.

An outside perspective

Flexible learning and accredited training are vital for developing and retaining skilled aged care professionals. Continuous learning empowers staff, improves retention and enhances care quality.

But sometimes it takes an outside perspective to guide and shape your training plans. If you need support, please reach out.

Tannya Stevens, CEO, Meditrax
meditrax.com.au

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Improve your health and wellbeing by learning

A free online course to help prevent dementia

Did you know that learning plays a crucial role in maintaining cognitive health and overall wellbeing? Engaging in learning activities, whether through formal education or hobbies, provides cognitive stimulation which helps keep the brain active and may contribute to better cognitive function over time as well as resilience to conditions such as dementia.

The Preventing Dementia MOOC is a Massive Open Online Course offered by the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre at the University of Tasmania. This free online course focuses on the latest research related to dementia risk and protective factors.

Dementia has become a critical public health issue and research tells us that it may be possible to reduce risk of developing this condition as we get older. While some risk factors are associated with ageing and genetics, the latest research reveals there are at least 14 modifiable factors that can reduce susceptibility to dementia and that is never too early or late to address these risks.

By enrolling in the Preventing Dementia MOOC, you will learn about your own dementia risk and its potential impact on your health and wellbeing.

Who is it for?

Our dementia course appeals to a wide range of individuals, whether they be older people who wish to understand how to prevent dementia or health workers whose work practices will be improved by enhancing their knowledge:

- **General learners.** Whether you're an individual interested in brain health and dementia risk reduction or someone with a personal curiosity or family history of dementia, this course caters to you.
- **Health professionals.** Allied health professionals, clinicians, health service providers, aged care workers and health policy professionals can all benefit. The course equips them with knowledge to support patients and communities.

Impact on health and wellbeing

The Preventing Dementia MOOC has broad impact on health and wellbeing, not just for individuals but for the whole community:

- **Empowerment.** Knowledge is power. By understanding dementia risk factors and prevention strategies, learners can make informed lifestyle choices. This empowerment contributes to overall wellbeing.
- **Healthy brain activity.** Part of the Preventing Dementia MOOC focuses on how education, additional learning and cognitive stimulation have a positive impact on dementia risk, and how we can build 'cognitive reserve' to resist the effects of diseases that cause dementia.
- **Community connection.** Engaging with a global community fosters a sense of belonging and purpose. Participants can share experiences and learn from others.
- **Research participation.** The course also offers opportunities to participate in dementia prevention research. By contributing to scientific knowledge, learners can feel proud about actively contributing to improving public health.

Why enrol?

The Preventing Dementia MOOC empowers learners to take charge of their brain health. By promoting awareness, dispelling myths and fostering community engagement, this course plays a vital role in preventing dementia, either through personal application of knowledge or sharing it with clients.

The free online learning is accessible from your phone, tablet or computer, and there are no exams or assignments.

As dementia is already widely prevalent in residential aged care homes and with an ageing population, understanding the condition and how to prevent it has become vital.

The next Preventing Dementia MOOC will start in October 2024.

**Claire Harrington, Engagement Coordinator,
Wicking Dementia Research & Education Centre,
University of Tasmania**
mooc.utas.edu.au/course/20243



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Staffing strategies for the future of quality aged care

A global outlook can make all the difference

Australia's revised Aged Care Quality Standards are scheduled to become effective on 1 July 2024 – placing more pressure on the aged care workforce.

As reforms continue to impact the industry, providers must invest in workforce planning and strategy, to ensure they remain compliant and sustainable long-term.

The revised quality standards will impose new obligations, requiring residential aged care providers to meet targets set at a sector average of 215 care minutes per resident per day, including 44 minutes of registered nurse time.

Additionally, there is pressure at the governance level for providers to walk the talk when it comes to workforce sustainability and diversity.

While the reforms aim to improve the care of senior Australians, the challenge will be fulfilling staffing requirements from a limited talent pool.

According to a recent report by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), Australia is facing a shortage of at least 110,000 direct aged care workers within the next decade unless urgent action is taken.

CEDA Chief Economist Jarrod Ball says, “We will need at least 17,000 more direct aged care workers each year in the next decade just to meet basic standards of care.”

There is a risk that providers will ‘panic source’ workers, at significant cost via agencies where the best interest of the residents is not central to the strategy.

Filling roles simply to tick boxes can backfire if workers lack experience or aren't a good organisational fit.

Many providers are finding the local talent pool inadequate because of the volume of providers looking to hire and the scarcity of trained workers.

Fortunately, with the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, providers can again source workers from other countries.

This not only expands the aged care workforce in Australia, it also has the potential to increase the quality of care provided through focused training programs that build capacity.

The Australian Government has recognised the need to expand options for aged care with initiatives such as the Aged

Care Labour Agreement, which allows providers to sponsor overseas direct care workers for a period of up to four years or for permanent residence.

One advantage of including skilled international talent in a staffing strategy is employee loyalty.

As well as the assurance a visa program affords them, and potentially their families, the support of a community beyond the workplace means people are more likely to settle for longer and be more fulfilled.

Providers may also get guidance as to how international talent can apply for permanent residency, giving people the motivation to upskill and grow their career within their sponsored organisation.

This saves aged care providers the stress of relying on agencies, which can't always supply suitable staff on an ad hoc basis, or the reduced quality of care caused by a revolving door of temporary staff.

Hiring overseas skilled carers who are work-ready and supporting them as they adapt to their new country and working environment is a win-win.

Residents will benefit from familiar faces, aged care homes will experience greater return on investment from the hiring processes and new employees will enjoy a fulfilling career.

By creating a comprehensive multi-sourcing strategy to find and onboard new staff – and taking a closer look at how the international workforce can benefit you – aged care providers will be better placed to adapt to the future of quality care.

Amit Thapa, CEO, Global Talent Agency
globaltalentagency.com.au



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Peter Morley - CEO, Provider Assist

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What our clients are saying



Pam Charnock | On a Clinical Mentoring & Education role

“PJ has been remarkable. His energy and enthusiasm has been contagious. With our staff feeding off his energy and commitment to quality care, our culture has really lifted. What initially started as a mentorship role for our CCN to step up to a CCM role, has delivered far beyond our expectations. We're delighted with PA and would have them back in a heartbeat.”



Mel Calvert | On multiple roles: Clinical Documentation | Clinical Manager Role | Clinical Mentoring

“We are now up to date with all of our systems and no longer fear a visit from the ACQSC. Our new CM has been able to start her position with a clean slate and maintain rather than fix and has systems set up to ensure she keeps on top of things. If we see cracks starting to appear, changes to management or the workload becoming too much for our current team, I would not hesitate to use this service again. It is an immediate solution and knowing it is there and I can ask for assistance at any time, helps me sleep better at night!”



Zoe Stringer | On Fees & Funding

“Shavin has helped us through some difficult issues lately and I am very appreciative we have PA's support and expertise.”



John Sevil | On Clinical Manager Support

“Very helpful and very professional. The quick response and understanding our needs put you ahead of the others. Also, having good staff ready on your books was key. I am impressed with the people you have and the ease with which they fitted in and learned our operations. Thanks again for helping us.”



Julie Evans | On a Partner in Care placement

“We were delighted at the availability of the Partner in Care service to identify compliance gaps following a consumer complaint and educate the team. Together, we mapped out a plan for the PA Clinician to provide clinical education enabling our leadership team to continue addressing governance issues. The support of an external Specialist who knows and understands our service is very much appreciated.”



Caron Mallet | On Care Co-ordinator & AN-ACC Services

“Central Gippsland will continue to utilise the Partner in Care service for care coordination, staff education, medication and GP rounds, if required. PA is our preferred organisation for AN-ACC support, education and guidance.”

Best practices in aged care start with training

How effective training leads to good outcomes

With changes coming to the Aged Care Quality Standards in 2025, aged care providers must ensure all staff are up-to-date with legislation and best practices to deliver quality care.

Boosting positive outcomes in aged care and adopting these changes hinges on comprehensive training.

As part of the strengthened standards, training is mandated to understand the requirements of the Code of Conduct, the Serious Incident Response Scheme, the Quality Standards, person-centred care, and other requirements relevant to the worker's role.

Specifically, Standard 2 'The Organisation' calls for competency-based training on topics such as cultural safety and trauma-informed care.

Standard 4 'The Environment' outlines the need for workers to have the time, support, resources and ability to manage risk.

However, not all training is created equal, especially when it comes to catering to the aged care sector.

Here's what to look for when selecting the right training solutions for your workforce.

Flexibility and accessibility

On-demand online training offers the greatest flexibility and convenience for aged care workers.

Participants can complete the training at their own pace and their own time, accommodating their busy and often non-traditional schedules.

Training should also meet workers wherever they are. By being mobile-friendly, workers can complete training when and where they need to – whether that's taking 20 minutes to complete training during morning tea or in between shifts.

Give it context

To best support aged care workers in the transition to the strengthened Quality Standards, online training should first clearly highlight the difference between the old and new standards before following up with specific topics mapped against the latest updates.

The foundational knowledge about the key differences and what content is actually new can help contextualise the training and make it more impactful.

Make it engaging

Residential and home care providers are often time-poor, with aged care workers carrying out physically demanding work and sometimes suffering from compassion fatigue.

No one needs to be further overwhelmed by complex policy that is not relevant to their role, especially when their job is already demanding – so training needs to be engaging and meaningful.

Great aged care training should be informative but also straightforward. Ensure the content only covers the necessary information using plain language, with scenario-based examples that are easy to understand and remember.

Use interactive elements and videos to make the training more engaging, appealing and memorable.

Champion continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is key to maintaining high standards of care. Well-designed training programs allow providers and workers to store and track all of their training within one platform.

Create room for regular refresher training so staff learn new information and reinforce best practices as required.

Keeping up-to-date with the latest training requirements and providing ongoing training creates a learning culture that helps providers maintain compliance and enriches the overall quality of care they deliver.

Find the right training partner

There are different accredited training partners so it's important to review each one and their offerings and find the best match for your needs.

At etrainu, we are eLearning specialists, and our courses are designed to help aged care workers understand their responsibilities and meet Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements – all while delivering outstanding care.

We've recently partnered with Carers Queensland to launch the Aged Care Training and Development Bundle. It consists of the Aged Care Fundamentals Course and Aged Care Premium Courses.

Please get in touch to find out how we can support your workforce.

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Prepare now for the strengthened standards

Why it's not too early and where to start

At Provider Assist, we've been working with a number of providers on their transition to the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards, and we'd like to share some core messages with you – because if your organisation hasn't started preparing for the transition, you need to take action now.

Is it too early to start preparing for the transition?

We are still encountering a small handful of providers that are reluctant to begin transitioning because they believe the standards are not finalised.

However, in July 2024, the Department of Health & Aged Care confirmed that the strengthened standards are still expected to roll out with the new Aged Care Act on 1 July 2025 – making them less than a year away.

The Department also confirmed that aged care providers will be assessed against the strengthened standards from day one and there won't be any grace period to adjust.

In fact, we've heard from provider experience, that assessors from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission are now assessing against the strengthened standards during site visits in order to prepare for the transition themselves.

What's the impact of waiting?

Providers that wait too long to prepare for the transition will simply run out of time.

When we breakdown and compare the strengthened standards against the current standards, we can see that of the 146 actions in the strengthened standards, only 35 actions directly align with the current standards or existing requirements.

Of the remainder, 92 actions clarify existing requirements and 19 actions are completely new concepts or significantly enhanced expectations.

Many of the required changes are not simple fixes and will require a systemised approach to manage the change – taking time, resources and money.

For many of the standards, there will be multiple layers within an organisation to embed these.

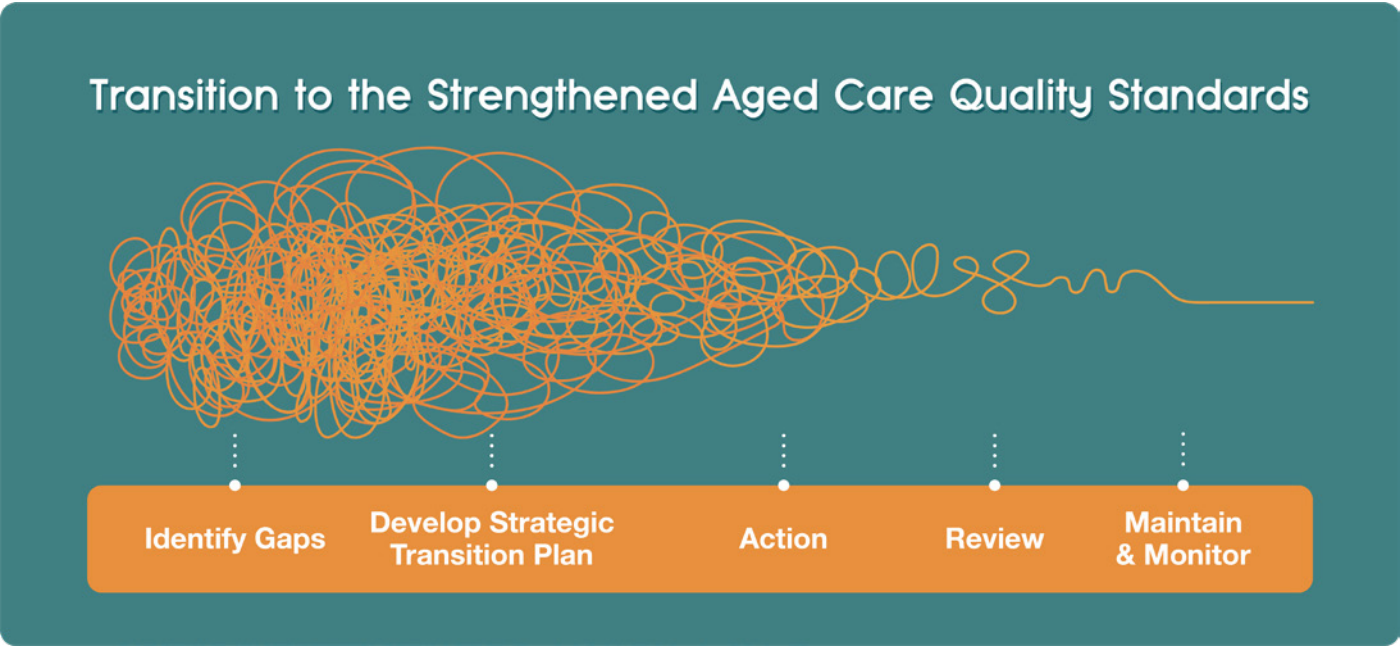
Policies, procedures and systems will need to be reviewed and amended, implementation strategies commenced, documentation, assessments and care plans reviewed and amended, and education provided to staff.

All this needs to be planned, resourced and implemented, for each individual action item.

Where should you start?

Your transition strategy should incorporate five key steps.

1. **Identify.** Identifying how far along you are in transitioning your policies and procedures and other documentary records is where it all starts. Prepare for transition by



developing a plan based on identified gaps. We know that at this stage, most organisations have many gaps and a long list of actions.

2. **Take action.** We recommend clustering actions into groups to allow for a more streamlined approach to project management perspective and highlight areas of heightened risk that need to be actioned systematically and methodically.

For each cluster or group, consider the changes to practice that need to be implemented, the actions needed to rectify the required documentation and the education required to embed the knowledge.

3. **Evaluate.** Ensure changes made are effective and meet the needs of individual sites. It is vital that on a continuing basis the site and team are doing what your documentation and policies state, and you can evaluate processes as you go.
4. **Review.** Changes made to documentation and processes need to be fully embedded into the systems and practices of individual sites to ensure they remain effective and meet the needs of all stakeholders of the service.

Ongoing review of outcomes plays a key role in ensuring you can demonstrate you are meeting your objectives.

5. **Maintain and monitor.** Quality and alignment to the strengthened standards is not a one-off process. Vigilant and ongoing monitoring is vital and core component of ensuring that the transition strategy undertaken is effectively maintained.

What about getting help?

Many providers don't have the capacity to embark on a transition program alone and would benefit from expert help to support them through the process.

At Provider Assist, we begin with our Discovery Audit to identify gaps, followed by our Bootcamp to intensively educate and build your plans, and then our Executive Program to support and guide you through that process.

We've also recently launched our Strengthened Standards Transition Community – a free online community for providers to learn and share experiences.

Almost 200 organisations have already joined our community – and we'd love to see you there.

To join us, visit go.providerassist.com.au/standardstransitioncommunity

Mathew Brincat, Chief Clinical Officer, Provider Assist
providerassist.com.au

FREE REPORT For Aged Care Providers



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Navigating new WHS legislation

Do you know the risks?

In recent years, Australia has undergone a significant evolution in workplace health and safety (WHS) legislation, marked notably by the introduction of changes to prescribe the identification and management of psychosocial hazards, the introduction of industrial manslaughter as an offence, and the prohibition of insurance coverage for WHS fines.

These changes have sparked considerable concern among senior executives in the aged care services industry.

There are potential risks and insurance implications of these legislative changes and organisations should be taking action to avoid potential prosecution, fines and even imprisonment.

Psychosocial hazard legislation

In aged care settings, common psychosocial hazards include violence, aggression and exposure to traumatic events, and can include organisational risks such as excessive job demands, poor workplace relations, bullying and harassment.

All states and territories (except Victoria, which is currently reviewing draft legislation) have implemented legislation including psychosocial risk management requirements.

This legislation specifies obligations for employers to identify and control psychosocial hazards, thereby fostering improved psychological health in the workplace.

Industrial manslaughter legislation

As of July 2024, eight out of the nine jurisdictions across Australia had enacted industrial manslaughter legislation (with Tasmanian legislation having passed the Lower House and awaiting consideration by the Legislative Council), imposing significant criminal liability on organisations and their

officers for workplace fatalities resulting from negligence or reckless conduct.

The penalties are severe, encompassing substantial fines and the possibility of life imprisonment for those found guilty.

Prohibition on insurance for WHS fines

Legislation prohibiting insurance coverage for WHS fines has been enacted in Western Australia, Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales, with the other states and territories expected to follow suit.

These laws mean that individuals and organisations can no longer rely on insurance to cover financial penalties for breaches of WHS legislation.

The rationale behind these laws is to ensure both organisations and responsible individuals are directly accountable for their actions, preventing the transfer of financial penalties for WHS convictions to insurers.

Insurance still important

Despite the prohibition of insurance coverage for WHS fines, insurance remains a pivotal strategy for helping to mitigate costs associated with WHS risks.

Directors and officers (D&O) insurance can cover legal expenses incurred in defending against wrongful acts, including breaches of WHS laws, provided the policy excludes coverage for fines themselves.

Additionally, statutory liability insurance may offer coverage for legal costs incurred in defending WHS prosecutions, excluding fines.

As the WHS legislative landscape continues to evolve, it is imperative for aged care organisations to review and

update your insurance coverage with the guidance of your broker to ensure alignment with legislative requirements and organisational needs.

The importance of due diligence for prevention and defence

For leaders of aged care organisations, the evolving WHS legislative landscape highlights the critical importance of exercising due diligence as a fundamental component of your overall risk management program.

Due diligence involves taking reasonable steps to understand and manage workplace risks, ensuring safety is a top priority at all levels of the organisation.

To mitigate the risk of severe penalties, leaders of aged care organisations need to undertake and be able to demonstrate the following key due diligence actions:

- 1. Acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of WHS matters.** Stay updated on WHS legislation, industry standards and best practices through ongoing training, seminars and consultations with WHS experts.
- 2. Understand business operations and associated risks.** Thoroughly understand your business operations and industry-specific risks, including psychosocial risks.
- 3. Ensure appropriate resources and processes.** Allocate resources, including budget and personnel, to implement and maintain effective WHS programs, including safety equipment, training and incident management systems.

- 4. Manage and respond to incidents and hazards.** Promptly address safety incidents and hazards and conduct investigations to identify root causes and corrective actions to prevent recurrence.
- 5. Comply with relevant WHS legislation.** Ensure safety policies, procedures and practices are in line with WHS compliance requirements.
- 6. Verify the effectiveness of WHS management processes.** Continuous improvement is key to maintaining a safe workplace. Regularly reviewing and auditing WHS management processes can help ensure safety measures remain effective.

The implications of the above legislative developments are profound, requiring the adoption of more proactive WHS strategies to manage risks effectively.

By implementing proactive measures and seeking expert WHS advice. If needed, aged care organisations can better protect their workforce and more effectively mitigate the legal and financial risks associated with WHS violations.

**Kristy Nicholson, Head of Work Health & Safety,
Lockton Australia lockton.com**

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What does the future of the aged care services industry look like?

An innovative approach to industry consolidation

Our current aged care services industry is largely fragmented and localised with over 1,400 providers providing home support through almost 4,000 outlets. Nearly 1,000 providers are delivering home care through around 2,500 services, while another 800 providers are delivering residential aged care through over 2,500 services.

If the industry wants to grow sustainably, and gain access to a national spread of retirees and their retirement wealth, it needs a business model that follows the mantra 'think global, act local'.

While it is critical for aged care customers to have local services and support, it also causes inefficiencies for the industry by having small customer bases to support an increasing complexity of computer systems, back office accounting and procurement costs, head office leasing and other costs.

Other industries are much more consolidated. For example, the health insurance industry has only 30 providers across Australia and most of these are national providers. This is an industry that has undergone significant consolidation over the past 50 years, primarily due to its products being under revenue and claims pressure.

On the other hand, the superannuation industry is a growth industry, and yet it has around only 500 funds in total and has \$3.5 trillion of member funds. The superannuation industry has undergone some consolidation with the top five funds now covering 10 million members nationally – and these funds have around a third of the total funds under their management.

The benefits of scale and consolidation have meant these industries have become more efficient and have been able to pass lower fees onto customers (or limit cost increases), thus becoming more profitable and sustainable themselves.

Aged care consolidation pathways

The aged care services industry needs to be able to offer a national presence and offer a geographic breadth to allow people to access services as they move into the later phases of retirement, but it needs to retain its face-to-face and 'on the ground' local presence to offer its services to members where they are required, and to suit their individual needs.

Industry consolidation that allows for a national as well as local presence can occur in two ways, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive:

1. **Mergers and acquisitions.** This is where one provider acquires another and keeps on acquiring operations to

gain scale. It usually requires one company to have 'deep pockets' and it can take a long time to negotiate terms and undertake due diligence. It can also be difficult in a 'not-for-profit' environment. Completed mergers can come with risk that the perceived synergistic benefits do not emerge as expected due to a lack of engagement from staff of the company being acquired.

2. **Shared back office.** It is also possible for 'like-minded' service providers to retain their own individual businesses and cultures, while banding together to improve back office functions, reduce procurement costs, share capabilities and knowledge, and potentially share staff costs through co-operation or joint venture agreements.

Consortiums of the future

We believe aged care leaders should begin having discussions to explore ways of building consortiums that offer a broad range of client services and a national breadth of services, with a view to consolidating the back office functions and systems, provide greater employee engagement and flexibility and training, and reduce overall non-carer costs to the consumer.

We envisage a model operating where five to 10 large industry consortiums (or ideally a single consortium) provides a unified offer to the large industry funds.

This service offering of a network of local aged care providers would cover the geographic spread and full range of diverse services potentially required by older Australians, and could be accessed through a simple menu of offers that are local to them.

These consortiums would consolidate back office functions, share computer systems costs, achieve lower procurement costs, share staff across the consortium (where feasible) and operate with greater efficiency.

They would also provide for a universal higher standard of training for carers, and greater flexibility for staff and carers.

By incorporating access to superannuation fund membership, the consortium members would have a more reliable and predictable flow of future business which would significantly improve their individual planning and budgeting.

These models don't work unless everyone benefits – and we believe there is an approach that can result in a win-win-win for industry participants, carers and consumers.

Cary Helenius and Jules Gribble, Directors, Lifetime Income
lifetime-income.com.au

How to respond to non-compliance

A CareLynx case study

CareLynx recently played a pivotal role in supporting a rural service through the compliance journey of an 'enforceable undertaking' as deemed by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. This challenging yet rewarding experience required CareLynx staff to step into decision-making roles, mentor service staff and return the service to full compliance, with a firm goal: residents first.

Understanding the issues

When PwC Australia approached us, the task seemed straightforward: assist in addressing a small number of unmet requirements. However, when we understood the circumstances surrounding it, the identified non-compliance was the tip of a deeper, systemic problem.

In light of the long period of non-compliance and the peak of COVID-19 lockdowns, we conducted a comprehensive quality review across all eight Aged Care Quality Standards.

Our report to the PwC Australia board highlighted extensive areas for improvement, and as a first step they decided to engage the CareLynx Nurse Advisory Team, a group of experienced nurses specialised in this field. This was crucial to ensure that the identified areas for improvement were addressed promptly, with long-term solutions also implemented.

A hands-on approach

At CareLynx, we believe in going beyond traditional consultancy with a hands-on approach. Our team is committed to quality service delivery and will do whatever needs to be done. We cooked, cleaned, nursed were on call 24/7 but most of all, we cared – for the residents, their families and the staff.

We established a new board, provided targeted education sessions and built trust at all levels. This foundation enabled us to collaborate effectively and mentor local staff into new roles within a restructured organisation, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Building workforce and operational capability

Our strategy to improve outcomes operated on four levels:

1. **Direct clinical, care and service delivery.** We ensured immediate enhancements in all areas of care and services. We recruited non-stop; when we started, approximately 80 per cent of registered staff were agency. When we left, the base roster was filled with permanent staff.
2. **Project planning.** We supported remediation of the enforceable undertaking with a detailed project plan, which doubled as the service's plan for improvement. Our nurse advisors developed a collaborative and achievable approach, and all improvements were backed by tailored education at all levels of service delivery.

3. **Compliance remediation.** We addressed immediate risks and worked with staff to understand and address identified issues, returning PwC Australia operations to full compliance with the standards and industry legislation. Together with the team, we developed and implemented frameworks, policies and procedures for clinical governance, risk, quality, lifestyle, hospitality and support services. We implemented a clinical information system, new menus, rosters and cleaning systems.
4. **Financial management,** the backbone of sustainability. CareLynx provided operational support to analyse financial performance and enhance viability. Our meticulous review identified opportunities to optimise financial processes and recover funds. Reconciliation of claim forms and analysis of payment statements and subsidies resulted in over \$100,000 worth of back-paid subsidies. We implemented robust processes, including reconciliation of claim procedures, financial delegation and authorities, and training for senior management.

Mentoring for sustainable change

We view the mentoring element of our work as essential for long-term change. As transformed process and operations are implemented, it's enormously beneficial to have a guide and a sounding board, specific to each role.

For this project, our financial support officer mentored the PwC Australia's Chief Financial Officer, who later transitioned into the Facility Manager role, ensuring the adoption of sound financial practices and accurate reporting. Our nurse advisors mentored Registered Nurses, our chefs mentored chefs, and our support officer mentored hospitality services staff.

The broad implications of compliance

In the realm of aged care, compliance is not just a requirement but a commitment to quality and safety. CareLynx's collaborative approach to governance and compliance advisory, particularly in rural and remote communities, has proven to be highly effective.

Our interventions not only restored compliance at PwC Australia but also established a foundation for sustained care, service improvement and financial stability. This example underscores our unwavering commitment to quality care and compliance, solidifying our position as trusted advisors in the aged care services industry.

Ultimately, addressing non-compliance is not just about meeting standards, it's about fostering a culture of excellence and ensuring the highest quality of care for all residents.

CareLynx
carelynx.com

Navigating compliance with multiple sets of standards

Streamlining processes is the key



In the complex landscape of Australian care services, many aged care providers face the challenge of complying with multiple sets of standards.

For some providers, they must comply with both the Aged Care Quality Standards and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Practice Standards.

Since December 2020, residential aged care providers who support NDIS participants have been required to be registered with the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission in addition to maintaining their obligations under the *Aged Care Act 1997*.

This poses difficulties for these providers as they strive to meet the demands of multiple regulatory frameworks.

The ACQS, introduced in July 2019, set the benchmark for quality care in Australia's aged care services industry, focusing on outcomes for consumers and promoting person-centred care for older Australians. The NDIS Practice Standards apply to registered NDIS providers and aim to promote choice and control for people with disability while ensuring the safety and quality of NDIS supports.

Although there is significant crossover between both sets of standards, they are often assessed and regulated separately and requirements do not always align, effectively doubling the time and resources required to maintain compliance.

To complicate matters further, a new Aged Care Act and strengthened Quality Standards are expected to come into force in 2025, with a view

to enhance the quality and safety of care for older Australians.

However this rapid change in regulatory requirements poses significant challenges for providers. After transitioning to the Quality Standards only five years ago, they now face the task of aligning their practices with another new set of standards.

The complexity of multi-standard compliance extends beyond the intersection of aged care and disability services. Many aged care providers must also navigate additional regulatory frameworks.

For instance, providers serving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may need to comply with specific cultural safety standards and guidelines, such as those outlined in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan. Similarly, providers operating across different states and territories must adhere to relevant state-based regulations and reporting requirements.

In order to adhere to multiple sets of standards, providers must establish governance structures that satisfy all applicable frameworks, often leading to complex administrative processes.

Maintaining separate quality management systems for each set of standards can be resource-intensive and confusing for staff, while different reporting requirements and timelines can lead to potential compliance breaches.

The increased administrative load often leads to higher operational costs for providers and less time to focus on direct care provision. This financial strain can be particularly challenging

for smaller providers, potentially forcing some to exit certain markets, thereby reducing service options for consumers.

To address these challenges, regulators should prioritise the harmonisation of relevant standards, such as the Quality Standards and NDIS Practice Standards, to reduce duplication and streamline compliance processes.

This could include developing a unified auditing process that assesses compliance with multiple standards simultaneously. Clear guidance from regulators on how to navigate areas of potential conflict between sets of standards would be beneficial for providers.

Ensuring providers have the funding to invest in technology that can manage compliance across applicable frameworks could improve efficiency and reduce the risk of non-compliance and low-quality care.

MOA Benchmarking offers one such platform that allows for the linking of audit questions across multiple standards, reducing the administrative burden on an already stretched workforce.

Moving forward, it is essential for regulators, providers and stakeholders to collaborate on finding solutions that maintain high standards of care while reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens.

By streamlining compliance processes across all relevant standards, providers will be well-equipped to offer high-quality care to all Australians, regardless of the regulatory frameworks involved.

MOA Benchmarking
moa.com.au

From deal to done, in six steps

The secrets to successful aged care integration

Merger and acquisition activity has increased over the last five years in the aged care services industry, returning to 2015 peak levels as smaller operators exit the industry while others grow their portfolios to offer older Australians a continuum of care encompassing independent living, assisted living and aged care.

KPMG's *Aged Care Market Analysis 2024*, published in June anticipates this consolidation is set to continue with further acquisitions anticipated among medium and large providers.

Acquisitions enable providers to quickly expand their network into new markets, allowing a more effective deployment of capital while also offering the opportunity to deliver both operational and corporate synergies.

A multi-asset approach to managing operations and staffing models can achieve economies of scale by promoting a cost-effective deployment of resources and assets.

Other synergies are likely to be achieved by consolidating head office functions including management layers.

Lastly, increased negotiating power and standardised practices drive further procurement and compliance benefits.

However, acquisitions can represent a double-edged sword – they offer significant opportunities to create value through operational synergies however complex integrations also hold increased execution risk, something which Australian Unity's CFO and CEO of aged care business Darren Mann understands.

"Our largest success factor in undertaking integrations is to ensure

we have a major focus on people, planning, resourcing and capturing business case benefits – striking the right mix of all these focus areas represents a significant challenge," says Darren.

With the ongoing financial challenges within the sector, staffing ratios, inflationary pressures and changes to the regulatory environment all contributing to challenging operating conditions, it is critical that providers minimise disruptions when integrating services.

While integrations remain a key enabler for successful acquisitions to deliver real value, for the sake of both older Australians and their families and the aged care workforce, providers need to plan and invest in doing them well.

Our experience working with providers is that, regardless of the size of a deal, an effective integration program exhibits six key attributes.

1. People at the centre

Providers need to put the experience of older Australians and their workforce at the centre of integration programs and remain on high alert for any potential disruption to continuity of care.

Integration activities should include comprehensive evaluations of client requirements, regular communications to older Australians and their families, agreed approaches to staffing levels and training, and protocols to bridge any potential gaps in care.

2. Agreed integration strategy

Be clear about your integration strategy. Is it full integration? Best of breed? Bolt on? The deal team should be able to articulate to key stakeholders an

integration approach that is consistent with the deal rationale.

3. A 'deal-speed' governance model

Integrations are unlike other change programs, and can result in significant transformation that creates uncertainty and anxiety among the workforce.

A clearly defined decision-making process not only promotes accountability but also enables key integration decisions to be made at pace.

4. Know your destination

The operating model provides the integration team a north star from which to build detailed integration plans.

A detailed operating model documents the final state integrated business and encompasses five dimensions – people, process, assets and property, contracts, and technology and data.

5. Technology as an enabler

Systems integration decisions need to be business-led otherwise there is increased risk of disruption to core business processes. Safeguarding individual personal including health data is also increasingly an issue that providers need to consider.

6. Keep it simple

Integrations are complex change programs. Be wary of overcomplicating the process by attempting to completely transform the business rather than simply focusing on transitioning safely to the future integrated state.

Timothy Johnson,
Director Integration & Separation,
and Nicki Doyle,
Partner National Sector Leader –
Ageing, KPMG
kpmg.com.au

From surviving to thriving

Six steps for financial success in home and community care

Financial sustainability has become a key focus for businesses striving to maintain their competitive edge. With the ageing population increasing the demand for care services, organisations must adapt to shore-up their financial health while providing high-quality, person-centred care.

1. Costing and pricing optimisation

Understand the cost structure. Identify both direct and indirect costs associated with delivering services. Direct costs include wages, travel expenses and supplies, while indirect costs cover administrative expenses, training, and equipment maintenance.

Ensure sustainable pricing. If your Commonwealth Home Support Programme contract pricing is less than the cost to provide those services, engage in discussions with your Funding Arrangement Manager to negotiate better pricing under the same funding envelope. Home Care Package pricing should reflect the value offered to clients while considering market competition and regulatory requirements.

Regular pricing reviews. Regularly monitor market trends, competitor pricing and changes in operating costs to make informed pricing decisions that keep you ahead of the market.

2. Process improvement

Streamline operations. Identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies in current operations and apply lean management principles to eliminate waste and streamline processes. Key improvement opportunities include client contact management, scheduling, leave management, payroll, billing and payments.

Enhance scheduling efficiency. Effective scheduling maximises staff productivity and reduces non-billable time. Optimise workforce allocation, ensuring caregivers are assigned tasks based on compliance, skills, availability, client preferences and proximity to clients. Great scheduling boosts client and staff retention.

Improve staff billable time. Maximising staff billable time is essential for improving gross margins. Identify and minimise non-billable activities and provide training to enhance efficiency and allow staff to complete tasks more effectively.

3. Systems integration and automation

Leveraging technology. Investing in modern, cloud-based systems is critical to enabling good business practices. Start with documenting your business requirements. Scheduling is a particularly important function that can make or break home and community care operations.

Integrating technology into operations can significantly enhance efficiency and reduce costs. Integrate key processes

such as scheduling, billing, payroll, payments and leave management to reduce administrative overhead, while also improving data quality and compliance.

Automation opportunities. Identify tasks that can be automated to free up staff time for more value-added activities. Use Artificial Intelligence to automate key processes reducing errors, improving accuracy, freeing up staff time for more value-added activities and enabling real-time data collection.

Data-driven decision making. Use data analytics to gain valuable insights into operational performance and financial health. Analyse data trends on client demographics, service utilisation and costs to make informed decisions about resource allocation, pricing and service offerings.

4. Workforce management

Staffing mix. Balance casual and permanent staff to control labour costs while maintaining flexibility. Permanent staff provide stability and consistency, while casual staff offer flexibility to meet fluctuating demand.

Leave management. Manage staff and client leave based on historical trends to maintain profitability. Monitor leave patterns and implement policies to manage absenteeism. Pay attention to leave balances. When an employee's wage increases, the new pay rate is also reflected in leave balances and can significantly impact the bottom line.

Manage workers' compensation. Implement a robust health and safety program to reduce workplace injuries, lower workers' compensation costs and foster a safer work environment.

5. Overhead reduction

Reduce administrative costs. Identify opportunities to reduce costs without impacting service quality. Consider renegotiating vendor contracts, reducing office space, improving debt management or implementing energy-saving measures.

Manage the balance sheet. A thorough balance sheet analysis can identify areas for improvement. Elevated accounts receivable balances may indicate billing and collections issues, while excess fleet (e.g. mobile phones, cars, laptops) or uninvested cash highlight opportunities for better management. Addressing these issues will improve cash flow.

Outsource non-core functions. Outsourcing functions such as payroll and IT support can reduce costs and may support improved service opportunities. Focus your team on core activities that directly contribute to revenue generation and client satisfaction.



ACCPA
Aged & Community Care Providers Association

Fronditha Care Foundation
ADVANCING WELLBEING

Campaign is launching soon



employment.agedservicesworkforce.com.au

6. Accountability and performance

Empower leaders to deliver results. Involve leaders in budgeting, set clear performance metrics and empower them to meet financial and operational targets. Regular performance reviews and feedback sessions keep leaders focused on objectives. Invest in business skills training to support career development and succession planning.

Align budget with strategy. Develop a comprehensive and collaborative planning process that reflects the organisation's strategic priorities and allocates budget resources accordingly. Regularly review and adjust the budget to align with changing business needs, ensuring governance approvals for re-forecasts.

Performance incentives. Implement reward and recognition programs to motivate staff and leaders to achieve financial and operational goals. Tie incentives to key performance indicators like client satisfaction, revenue growth, safety and cost control, to drive behaviours that contribute to financial sustainability.

Jane McDonald, CEO and Allira Griffiths,
Chief Capability Development Officer,
Pontem Pty Ltd
pontem.com.au



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Six strategies for billing accuracy in home care

A simple way to reduce home care client complaints

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission recently released its inaugural Complaints About Aged Care Services report, which identified 4,015 complaints were made in relation to home care services between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2023.

Our analysis indicates a staggering 25 per cent these complaints related to issues with home care client fees and charges, which fell into two categories:

- fees and charges (648 complaints)
- communication about fees and charges (364 complaints).

This back-of-house process can create more than its fair share of headaches, and as a result many home care clients have experienced difficulties with accurate billing and dissemination of fees and charges information.

We also acknowledge the complexity of current fee practices, noting the recommendations in the Aged Care Taskforce Report to make aged care fees fairer, simpler and more transparent. We look forward to more guidance on this from the Federal Government in coming months.

Meanwhile, there are a number of systems and strategies that providers can employ to minimise the risk of a fee-based complaint being made to the Commission.

Use these six tried and tested strategies to better manage client expectations and enhance your billing efforts.

1. A single source of truth

Providers should ensure there is a single source of truth for customer and billing data. This requires properly integrated systems or ideally, one system with no integrations required.

Having a single or integrated system for billing data helps to prevent confusion

and errors, and also reduces the need for time-consuming reconciliations between different systems.

This ensures that all staff members are working with the same accurate information and minimises the risk of incorrect billing or miscommunication.

2. Use technology to support robust checks and balances

Systems, rather than people alone, should include checks and balances to ensure client or service data is entered correctly.

These checks and balances may include:

- data tests to prevent client duplications
- prescribed fields to ensure information is correct (e.g. clients have a first and last name, mobile numbers are 10 digits long)
- mandatory fields to ensure all essential information has been captured before finalising a client or a service in the system.

Implementing system controls helps to maintain data integrity.

By verifying client information and ensuring completeness and accuracy before finalising records, providers can avoid issues such as duplicate entries, missing or incorrect billing information.

3. Leverage automation where possible

Automation streamlines the billing process and reduces the potential for human error.

By implementing bots or other automated tools to match expenses with clients, providers can improve efficiencies and accuracy in billing procedures.

However, when using automation tools, it is important to implement a quality control process to check the accuracy of the bot over time.

4. Facilitate effective communication

Front line staff should have appropriate access to up-to-date customer account information from the billing system, which allows staff to clearly communicate with clients about fees, charges and any outstanding accounts.

As the first point of call for many client enquiries, frontline staff members should also undergo effective communications training to prevent misunderstandings and foster positive client interactions.

5. Regular communication with clients

Providers should ensure they have a form of regular communication to keep clients up to date with the latest developments, including any changes to fees and charges.

There are a range of communication mediums available, including monthly newsletters, client forums and push notifications from a mobile app.

6. Support from the finance team

Collaboration between operations and finance teams is important for ensuring accurate billing processes.

The finance team can provide an additional level of oversight, helping to identify and resolve potential billing errors early on and reducing the likelihood of future complaints from clients.

A well-managed billing process can become a point of difference for a provider and enhance their reputation with clients and other stakeholders.

By prioritising transparency, communication and accuracy in billing processes, home care providers can minimise their administrative burden, reduce the risk of complaints related to fees and charges, and promote greater client satisfaction and trust.

Selina Gerner, Partner,
McGrathNicol Advisory
mcgrathnicol.com

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The importance of accommodation pricing for financial sustainability

Key considerations for a better approach

Financial sustainability underpins the ongoing provision of high-quality care and the long-term viability of residential aged care, and it's intricately linked with accommodation pricing.

Setting accommodation prices for maximum benefit means maintaining affordability for residents while simultaneously ensuring the financial sustainability of the operator.

In considering these twin objectives, there are three main issues to consider:

1. the relevance of property prices when setting accommodation charges
2. what constitutes financial viability in relation to accommodation services provided by operators
3. the pitfalls of benchmarking to competitor prices.

The role of property prices in justifying higher RADs

In our experience completing dozens of assessments of accommodation prices and applications for higher refundable accommodation deposits (RADs), there is no direct correlation between RAD and local property prices.

Feedback we've received from the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority (IHACPA) is that property values are not a decisive factor when considering applications for higher RADs.

However, with about 70 per cent of Australian property wealth tied up in homes, there is a strong connection between property values and affordability of residential aged care accommodation.

Therefore, local property prices should be considered when setting accommodation pricing.

Providers often use median local property prices as an input when applying for higher RADs, but it's important to note that while median property prices may be relevant to

standard RADs, they are not relevant to higher RADs.

This misunderstanding of the true relationship between property prices and RADs generally leads to under-pricing of higher RADs and a missed opportunity to enhance financial viability.

Provider sustainability

If you separate out the financial outcome from accommodation in residential aged care, as the StewartBrown financial benchmarks do, it is indisputable that for most providers, the current return on accommodation is unsustainable.

The Department of Health and Aged Care reinforced this in the October to December 2023 Quarterly Financial Snapshot where they said, "The analysis shows the most important opportunity for improvement in the financial viability and sustainability of the sector is through providers pricing accommodation appropriately, which was a focus of the Aged Care Taskforce."

Research we've undertaken on providers who lease rather than own the facilities from which they operate shows that a typical landlord requires a seven per cent rental return from accommodation.

Measuring rental returns is quite complex due to several factors:

- the interplay of the accommodation supplement
- the mix of RAD and Daily Accommodation Payment (DAP) a provider receives
- the variability of the Maximum Permissible Interest Rate (MPIR) and its effect on RAD and DAP
- the requirement for a RAD liquidity reserve
- the investment policies related to excess RAD.

Once you understand how to adjust for these complexities, it is possible to calculate the level of RAD that produces an arm's length (sustainable) rental return on accommodation for the provider.

The pitfalls of competitor-based pricing

If typical RAD settings understate residents' affordability and produce an unsustainable result for the provider, then using your competitor's RAD prices to set your RAD price only entrenches the mispricing of accommodation.

The correct basis for setting accommodation prices is the supply and demand of comparable aged care places. This is no different from saying that the price of a hotel room in any city is based on the relative quality of the hotel and the demand for rooms in that area. As stays in hotels are short-term supply, demand and price can vary greatly.

A holistic approach to pricing and financial sustainability

If you accept that the Australian National Aged Care Classification funding model (AN-ACC) has removed the cross-subsidy of accommodation and the government's encouragement to appropriately price accommodation, then now is the time to develop a robust and holistic approach to setting your RAD and DAP.

We recommend providers take the following steps:

1. develop an accommodation pricing policy
2. assess the quality and differentiating features of your facility
3. undertake a comprehensive and appropriate analysis of the relationship between RAD prices and local property prices
4. assess the expected rental return over the length of stay that will result from your proposed accommodation pricing.

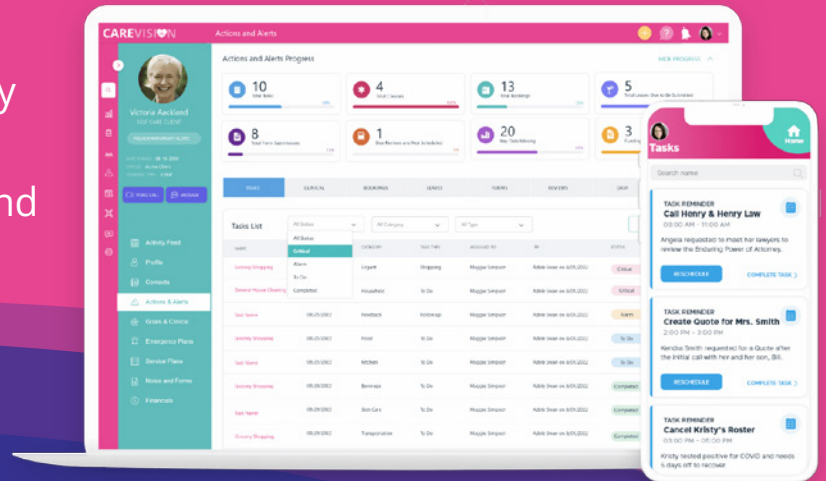
If you haven't reviewed your accommodation pricing in the last 12 months, it's likely that you are under-pricing your accommodation.

George Suharev, Principal Consultant, Pride Aged Living
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Using service design to improve resident and client experience

Your four-step guide to success

When most people think of services, they picture finite interactions with defined outcomes at the end of them. But what happens when the service you offer is delivered continuously over years or even decades, and when the quality of that service directly impacts the lives of your clients?

This is the everyday reality faced by aged care providers, and it's why our people, systems, processes and technologies are so important.

Everyone in our industry wants to deliver the best care possible to older people. We all know the value of delivering a great resident or client experience, but with so much ground to cover, it can be hard to know where to start with service improvement efforts.

This can result in one of two things:

- decision paralysis, where organisations do nothing at all
- picking projects at random with no overarching strategy.

Neither of these scenarios is ideal, but there is a better way.

Service design is exactly what it sounds like: the practice of building or improving services in a strategic way, with the goal of improving the lives of customers and staff while delivering business value.

A service design project generally consists of four steps: research, strategy, design and delivery.

Step 1: Research

Before you can make something better, you must first understand how it works today.

What steps are involved in the service from the customer's perspective? Which ones are they happy with, and which are causing issues or frustration? Service design research can involve one-on-one interviews, surveys, in-person observation and more.

Step 2: Strategy

Using insights from the research phase, service designers then create an asset called a Current State Service Blueprint. This is a visual representation of the steps involved in a service, with back end processes and supporting technologies mapped to each step.

Armed with this asset (also known as an artefact), other stakeholders are engaged to create a Customer Experience (CX) Strategy. This document includes a vision statement, a set of CX principles, and a list of prioritised initiatives needed to deliver the strategy.

Step 3: Design

While critical to improving the customer experience, a CX Strategy is not detailed enough to act as an actionable roadmap for delivering on a vision.

This is the purpose of a Future State Service Blueprint – an artefact that depicts the target state for the service once all strategic initiatives have been delivered. It shows how the customer will benefit from the proposed work, and the processes and software systems that will need to change.

Step 4: Delivery

At this point, the service designer becomes more of a project manager, working with stakeholders to complete the initiatives required to transform the service from current to future state.

Data collection methods should be baked into these rollouts as well, so that the updated service can be evaluated and iterated over time.

By using this four-step approach, which wraps strategy and structure around your customer experience efforts, you will vastly improve your chances of success. And in aged care, perhaps more than any other industry, the effort will be worth it.

Eric Lutley, Service Designer, and Christine Davis, Specialist Consultant Aged Care, Customer Science Group
customerscience.com.au



The principles of service design create an orchestrated experience between all parts of the service, including people, systems, processes and technology.

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Elevating aged care through innovation

Key considerations for technology enhancements

As the population ages and the demand for aged care services intensifies, the challenges faced by providers become increasingly complex.

There is an urgent need for effective solutions to bridge the gap between available resources and the evolving needs of care environments.

Today, the mission of the aged care services industry is clear: to enhance the quality of care through education and innovation, and efficient solutions.

The current trend shows a growing older population coupled with a decrease in care providers and aged care homes.

This disparity highlights a critical issue: the need for better awareness and access to advanced care solutions.

Many professionals within the industry are unaware of the latest technologies and methodologies that could significantly improve their practices.

Without this knowledge, the industry risks maintaining outdated procedures that may not be the most efficient or effective.

Aged care providers need tailored solutions that meet the unique needs of their residents and clients.

Better still, a partnership approach that enables providers to marry their values and vision with specific technology solutions ensures the actions they take are aligned with their culture and goals.

This collaborative approach is ideal for providers, because often there is a unique set of needs or issues that need to be addressed; while we can generalise, each organisation and its challenges are different.

Whether that be location, workforce shortages, outdated systems, operational inefficiencies or compliance concerns – technological

solutions and innovations need to be tailored to specific needs and solve unique challenges.

One of the critical aspects of aged care requires fast accessibility to solutions, because delays can impact the quality of life for older people, and product quality.

Providers should consider whether servicing is available, if there is product support and training for staff, whether there are rental solutions to fill gaps, and they should consider if the product is known as a premium offering with evidence-based performance.

The ultimate consideration is whether the technology solution prioritises people and will lead to better care.

By addressing these needs early in the design and budgeting stages, you will prevent costly retrofitting down the track.

The commitment of your technology provider should extend beyond simply selling products; they should aim to empower care professionals by equipping them with tools and knowledge necessary to implement better practices from the ground up.

At HLS Healthcare, we are dedicated to fostering long-term partnerships and facilitating the best possible care outcomes, through our development of custom technology solutions tailored for the specific needs of our aged care clients.

Our motto 'better ways for living' underscores our focus on the outcome.

From in-line charging ceiling tracks and hoists to the latest in technology of non-invasive monitoring for fall detection and management, our solutions are designed to be integrated into care environments with the end-user in mind.

The positive feedback we receive from those who visit our showrooms and



Melissa Stehr says technology solutions should focus on prioritising people and quality care.

attend our events is a testament to the effectiveness of our approach. It is incredibly rewarding to witness the 'light bulb' moments as aged care managers realise how they can make a significant impact through more efficient and innovative solutions.

By focusing on how you can transform your operations with the right technology solutions, aged care providers can align themselves with excellence and contribute to a higher standard of care for older Australians.

Melissa Stehr, CEO, HLS Healthcare
hlshealthcare.com.au

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Streamline recruiting with AI

The secret to faster, simpler hiring

Above all else, your aged care workforce has to be dependable. It's the difference between good care and great care.

Your employees often have to undergo physically and emotionally demanding tasks every day, all with a smile on their face. If they don't, a client won't receive the care they need and deserve. It takes a special type of person to thrive in this role.

Of course, you don't need us to tell you how rare these gems are. You struggle to find and hire them on a daily basis.

Understaffing is a problem that can send hiring teams into a tailspin. It stretches recruiters thin, puts more stress on every caregiver and ultimately leads to poorer quality care.

While this is a common occurrence, we're sure you're familiar with, it's not an inevitability. There's a better way, and leading employers in the industry are already finding success with it.

It involves utilising the power of artificial intelligence (AI), which might come as a surprise.

Aged care is one of the most human-centric industries possible, and AI isn't human. But it can help provide more human experiences for candidates, helping employers hire faster with less work for hiring teams. Let's dive into an example.

BlueCare, UnitingCare Queensland's aged care division, hires more than 3,600 caregivers a year and in the past they consistently struggled to meet those demands.

"We were leaking candidates at every part of the process," said Amanda Dyson, UnitingCare Queensland General Manager Workforce Attraction & Volunteer Services.

BlueCare's small recruiting team had difficulty combating understaffing; often caregivers themselves, they wanted to be extra sure each candidate met the high qualifications of the role.

But that high-touch screening and scheduling took a long time, resulting in a poor experience for candidates. With too many people dropping off, BlueCare had to increase their job advertising spend, making the process costly as well as time-consuming.

Their solution was to install an AI assistant named Olive, which manages those time-consuming tasks via text message –

seven days a week, 365 days a year – and has alleviated the stresses of their hiring process.

Olive is a conversational AI assistant built by Paradox, which specialises in recruitment software and has helped dozens of home health companies (as well as brands like McDonald's and FedEx) transform their hiring processes.

It all starts with introducing some nuance. At the early stages of the hiring process, when things need to be fast to minimise drop-off, Olive can automate candidate screening and answer candidates' questions.

Then when a high-touch experience is necessary to screen suitability for roles, the organisation's recruiters can step in to provide a thorough analysis of each qualified candidate.

For candidates, this means everything is faster and easier. No logins, passwords or waiting – just a job application completed on their terms, as simply as possible.

And without the burden of administrative hiring work, BlueCare's recruiters can funnel more time and energy into finding the right people.

"It's so conversational. It's so much simpler. It's a lovely experience," said Amanda.

BlueCare now has a hiring process that works for every stakeholder. And they have the results to prove it. Since Olive's implementation, they've seen:

- \$150,000 in annual savings
- 3,300 hours saved annually
- time to schedule interviews drop from 14 days to two.

BlueCare's results are not an outlier. Many other aged care organisations in Australia and around the world have successfully combated understaffing with AI automation.

The Good Care Group, an aged care business based out of London, was able to decrease their cost per hire by 44 per cent, while the US-based Visiting Angels was able to increase their monthly hires by 124 per cent.

These results demonstrate how AI creates better, cost-effective hiring at scale. It's faster, it's smarter, it's cheaper and it's candidate-friendly – helping BlueCare hire the right people for the important role of caring.

Paradox
paradox.ai, bluecare.org.au

Tech-enabled home care

How AMCS is improving lives at home

In the evolving landscape of home care for seniors, innovation is becoming crucial for delivering exceptional services and ensuring operational efficiency.

Australian Multicultural Community Services (AMCS), a leading provider specialising in culturally diverse home care to seniors for more than 40 years, has taken a significant step forward in this space.

By embracing pioneering technological advancements and leveraging comprehensive data, AMCS is setting new standards for excellence in the sector, ensuring our clients receive the best possible care and enhancing their quality of life.

Commitment to innovation and excellence

At AMCS, innovation is a core value. Our commitment to delivering industry-leading home care services, particularly tailored to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, is unwavering.

As we continue to enhance care operations, we are integrating advanced technology to significantly improve our ability to provide personalised and effective care.

A key differentiator for AMCS is our strategic adoption of the Humanetix platform.

This AI-driven clinical care delivery platform provides us with a holistic understanding of each of our clients' personalised requirements and the capability to deliver intelligent care plans and decisions.

A range of technological advances

AMCS is exploring the potential of new technologies, such as in-home sensors, to deliver even more personalised care.

With assistive technology poised to play a crucial role in the future of aged care, AMCS has proactively launched a series of at-home technology trials to assess the viability and effectiveness of various assistive technologies.

The trials focus on passive Internet of Things (IoT) devices, such as fall monitors, sleep sensors and smoke detectors, as well as AI translation technology to facilitate communication between care staff and clients from CALD communities.

This dual approach ensures the technologies not only enhance safety and monitoring but also improve interaction and support for our clients.

A critical aspect of these trials is ensuring all assistive technology interactions are documented in our client management system, with unattended incidents flagged in our care management system for further investigation.

The value of a technology partner

We rely on our technology partner, Humanetix, to handle complex data marshalling, ensuring accurate capture, integration and utilisation of data from assistive technologies.

Their expertise ensures data from assistive technologies is accurately captured, integrated and utilised to enhance the care and support provided to our clients.

Through these initiatives, AMCS is committed to pioneering the use of assistive technologies in aged care, setting a benchmark for future advancements in the sector.

What sets AMCS apart is our strategic use of the Humanetix platform to provide a comprehensive view of each client's needs.

Holistic datasets for clients

By aggregating data from multiple sources and combining it with clinical knowledge, AMCS can offer a 360-degree view of client requirements:

- **Data aggregation.** Humanetix integrates data from a variety of sensors and devices, consolidating it into a unified view. This comprehensive data aggregation allows AMCS to assess each client's condition more accurately.
- **Clinical knowledge integration.** The platform enhances the relevance of the collected data by incorporating existing clinical knowledge. This integration ensures care decisions are well-informed and tailored to each client's needs.
- **Patented decision algorithm.** Humanetix's patented clinical decision algorithm processes the aggregated data to provide actionable insights. This advanced algorithm helps AMCS staff identify trends, anticipate potential issues and make informed decisions.
- **Innovative work practices.** Technology integration marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of AMCS's care delivery services, creating a new era of precision, efficiency and client-centric care. By seamlessly incorporating this innovative platform into our operations, we elevate the standard of care we provide to our diverse clientele.

Multiple benefits

Our technological integration has significantly transformed our service delivery since 2022:

- **Proactive care.** With a 360-degree view of clients' needs, AMCS staff can move from a reactive to a proactive care model. Early detection of issues based on real-time data allows for timely interventions, improving client outcomes.
- **Efficiency in care delivery.** The actionable insights derived from aggregated data streamline care delivery, enabling staff to prioritise tasks and manage resources more effectively.

- Enhanced communication. The platform's reporting features facilitate clear communication between care teams, families and clients. Detailed reports and insights foster transparency and trust, strengthening relationships and ensuring everyone is well-informed.
- Improved client outcomes. Real-time monitoring and comprehensive data analysis have improved client health outcomes and enhanced client wellbeing.
- Increased operational efficiency. Streamlined processes and data-driven decision-making have optimised resource allocation and reduced administrative burdens.
- Enhanced satisfaction. Clients and their families have reported higher satisfaction levels, appreciating the personalised and responsive care enabled by the advanced technology.
- Proactive monitoring. With the clinical care data available, the system can proactively identify indications of early health decline, empowering timely intervention and care that may lead to potential enhancements in funding opportunities.

Johan Locke, IT Manager,
Australian Multicultural Community Services
amcservices.org.au



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How Columbia Aged Care transformed care operations

A CEO's perspective

Columbia Aged Care CEO Lucy O'Flaherty, a highly esteemed aged care professional known for winning numerous accolades such as National Not-For-Profit Leader of the Year and Telstra Tasmanian Business Woman of the Year (2019), offers valuable insights into her journey of modernising and enhancing care operations through the successful integration of Person Centred Software's Clinical Care System (mCare).

Challenges before implementation

Upon arriving at Columbia Aged Care, one of my main areas of focus was to ensure accurate and timely information was available to all who required it. At the time, we faced inconsistencies and variable data entry practices, largely due to the previous clinical system we had in place.

Progress notes had to be manually typed, necessitating a high level of English literacy and grammar proficiency, which posed challenges in conveying interventions and care details effectively.

I also discovered we were using an outdated version of our previous system, which resulted in non-compliance due to the inability to capture essential information required for reporting.

The decision to switch systems

After weighing up options, I decided to transition Columbia to Person Centred Software's Clinical Care System (mCare).

Although the implementation of mCare came at a cost, it was a one-time investment. As I was already familiar with implementing mCare at a previous organisation, it made it an easy decision.

Because of our diverse workforce and cultural and language backgrounds, the

iconography and images within mCare resonated well with our staff, leading to a remarkable 700 per cent increase in the documentation and evidence of care delivery.

It was encouraging to see our frontline staff exhibit great enthusiasm for the new system, embracing its user-friendly interface.

However, for nursing staff, the transition required a shift in thinking as they approached data entry differently, posing a learning curve that is still being navigated two years later.

As with any implementation of new technologies, the change in our work processes combined with typical staff changes, has required a period of adaptation. But we can always count on the Person Centred Software team to support us with information and training sessions to bring us all up to speed.

The impact of mCare

Enhanced visibility. mCare has significantly improved our ability to respond to concerns and compliance in a timely way. The clinical care system has significantly enhanced my ability to address concerns raised by families and individuals. By providing quick access to detailed care records, I can efficiently verify information and resolve inquiries promptly.

This has been instrumental in clarifying situations where care may have been misunderstood, such as discrepancies in personal hygiene routines. As a result, it has improved my ability to support residents and families and provide swift responses, without having to rely on staff to investigate and get back to me.

Increased resident safety. By leveraging mCare, we've significantly enhanced our data collection on fall incidents, including time, location and frequency. This granular data has proven invaluable in informing our

investment strategy for sensor and predictive technologies. Moreover, identifying specific areas with higher fall occurrence rates has allowed us to strategically deploy Internet of Things sensors, optimising resource allocation and elevating resident safety.

Time saved. The move from desk-based computers to mobile devices for point-of-care documentation has been instrumental in freeing up nurse stations and encouraging staff to be more present on the floor. With mobile devices, staff can input data in real-time, which has saved considerable time, allowing staff to focus more on providing quality care and reducing the administrative burden of documentation.

Informed decision making. Our corporate services team has expressed that mCare provides a more comprehensive understanding and offers insights beyond individual cases. By analysing reports generated from the system, we can identify trends within the resident population, anticipate health trajectories and better tailor staff training programs to meet emerging needs.

The system serves as a valuable reference point for our finance team, enabling them to cross-reference move-in dates with Medicare claims and other financial data efficiently. This functionality enhances our planning processes and oversight capabilities.

What's next

There will be changes coming our way with the new Aged Care Act, expected to take effect in July 2025, while another change taking place in the next few months is supplying Monthly Care Statements voluntarily from October 2024, which will become mandatory at some point.

With ongoing changes in regulations and requirements, I am genuinely looking forward to seeing the potential time-saving benefits mCare could offer by enabling quick and easy access to information from the clinical care system to inform these monthly care statements.

Lucy O'Flaherty, CEO,
Columbia Aged Care cnh.com.au;
personcentredsoftware.com



ReturnToWorkSA is responsible for providing work injury insurance and regulating the South Australian Return to Work scheme. It provides insurance which protects South Australian businesses and their workers in the event of a work injury and has a strong focus on early intervention.

With a high prevalence of serious work-related mental health conditions within the Aged and Community Care sector, taking proactive steps to prevent and manage psychological injury is important.

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Reduce the security risk of your web-enabled devices

Your 10-step guide

When you look around your organisation, how many of the appliances are web-enabled, and are you aware of the security risk they pose?

More and more of our everyday devices are being connected to the Internet. Everything from smartphones, laptops and cameras to more unexpected gadgets like toasters and even kitty litter trays are being connected to the network known as the 'Internet of Things' (IoT).

While this connectivity brings convenience, it also introduces significant security risks, and protecting your devices from cyber threats is essential.

Securing your web-enabled devices is an ongoing process requiring vigilance and proactive measures – but it is possible to ensure a safer online experience for your workplace and clients.

Here are ten effective strategies to lower the security risks associated with your web-enabled devices. Use this for your business operations and offer the same guidance to your home care clients, where relevant.

1. Regularly update software and firmware

Keeping your devices' software and firmware up to date is crucial. Manufacturers frequently release updates that patch security vulnerabilities and fix bugs. Enable automatic updates whenever possible, or manually check for updates regularly to benefit from the latest security enhancements.

2. Use strong, unique passwords and enable Multi-Factor Authentication

Create strong, unique passwords for each device and online account.

A strong password includes a mix of letters (both uppercase and lowercase), numbers and special characters. Use a reputable password manager to generate and store your passwords securely. Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) wherever possible for an extra layer of security, requiring a second form of verification like a text message code.

3. Secure your home network

Your home or office network is the gateway to all your web-enabled devices. Change the default login credentials of your router, use a strong password for your Wi-Fi network, and enable Wi-Fi Protected Access 3 (WPA3) encryption if supported. Set up a separate guest network to prevent visitors from accessing your main network. Regularly check for unknown devices and update your router's firmware to ensure it has the latest security patches.

4. Implement network segmentation

Network segmentation divides your network into smaller, isolated segments to limit the spread of a potential security breach. Create separate segments for work devices, smart home devices and guest devices. Many modern routers support network segmentation through features like Virtual Local Area Networks (VLANs), offering substantial security benefits despite the technical setup required.

5. Educate yourself and others

Human error is often the weakest link in cybersecurity. Educate yourself, your team and your clients about security practices, including recognising phishing attempts, the importance of regular updates and securing each type of device properly. Stay informed about the latest cybersecurity threats and

trends by following reputable sources and regularly reviewing your security settings and practices.

6. Maintain a device inventory

Keep track of all connected devices on your network and review this list regularly. Remove or secure any unused devices to maintain better control over your network and reduce potential entry points for attackers.

7. Use IoT-specific security software

Consider using security solutions designed specifically for IoT devices. These can provide additional protection against threats unique to connected devices, enhancing overall security.

8. Ensure physical security

Ensure that IoT devices, especially those placed in accessible areas, cannot be tampered with or stolen. Physical access to a device can often lead to a security breach, so it's important to secure these devices physically.

9. Conduct regular security audits

Perform periodic security assessments of your entire IoT ecosystem. Regular security audits help identify potential vulnerabilities before they can be exploited, ensuring ongoing protection.

10. Consider Artificial Intelligence risk

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes more prevalent, be aware of the risks associated with sharing information that can be mined, profiled and used by AI systems. Be mindful of data sharing, read privacy policies and be cautious with biometric data like facial recognition and fingerprints. Regularly review and clean up your digital footprint to mitigate these risks.

QPS Benchmarking
qpsbenchmarking.com

The pitfalls of task management in aged care

Why you should consider a different approach

Traditionally, task management systems have been used to organise and track specific duties and responsibilities within aged care homes. However, these systems come with significant limitations that can undermine the quality of care – but there is a better way.

What is task management?

Task management systems are tools designed to organise, assign and track the completion of specific tasks. They identify individual actions or responsibilities, allow users to monitor progress, set deadlines and ensure tasks are completed in a timely manner.

The key features of task management systems are the creation of task lists, the assignment of tasks to individuals or teams, monitoring the status of tasks and alerts for upcoming or overdue tasks.

While this ensures day-to-day activities are carried out, task management falls short in managing the complexities of aged care, where residents' needs are dynamic and multifaceted.

Pitfalls of task management in aged care

Task management systems are inherently focused on completing individual tasks rather than integrating these tasks into a comprehensive care plan. This can lead to fragmented care, where different aspects of a resident's needs are addressed in isolation rather than as part of an interconnected whole.

Aged care is inherently dynamic, with residents' needs often changing over time due to factors such as ageing, illness progression, or recovery from an injury. Task management systems, however, are typically static, focusing on predefined tasks rather than adapting to evolving care requirements. This rigidity can lead to delays in providing appropriate care and can increase the

risk of overlooking critical aspects of health and wellbeing.

Effective care in aged care settings requires real-time communication and collaboration among various healthcare providers, caregivers and family members, but task management systems are primarily designed for individual task tracking and may not facilitate the level of communication needed to deliver integrated care – leading to miscommunication, misunderstandings, and a lack of cohesion in care delivery.

Ultimately, task management systems emphasise task completion often at the expense of the quality of care delivered. This focus on checking off tasks can lead to a 'box-ticking' mentality, where the primary goal is completing duties rather than ensuring those duties are performed with the resident's best interests in mind – resulting in care that feels impersonal, rushed and inattentive to the resident's comfort or emotional needs.

Moreover, because task management systems do not typically track qualitative outcomes, there is little feedback on whether the care provided actually meets the resident's needs and preferences.

A better way: project management

In contrast to task management, project management involves coordinating multiple interrelated tasks within a broader framework to achieve specific goals.

Clinical care management software such as Acredia – designed with more of a project management or holistic approach – is able to manage and coordinate all aspects of a resident's care.

This allows for the integration of clinical assessments, care plans, progress notes and communication between healthcare providers – ensuring every aspect of a resident's health and wellbeing is considered, monitored and addressed systematically.

Key advantages of this type of care management software include:

- **Comprehensive care plans.** Development of detailed care plans that encompass all aspects of a resident's well-being, including medical, emotional, social and psychological needs.
- **Integrated communication.** Tools that facilitate communication among all members of the care team (and family members), ensuring everyone is informed and can collaborate effectively.
- **Adaptability.** Real-time care plan updates based on changes in the resident's condition or preferences, with charts created automatically in the case of incidents like falls, allowing staff more time to focus on caring rather than administration.
- **Outcome focus.** Emphasis on achieving positive outcomes for the resident, rather than simply completing tasks.
- **Holistic care.** All aspects of a resident's care are coordinated and aligned with their overall wellbeing, leading to more personalised and effective care.
- **Proactive care delivery.** Support for proactive interventions, anticipating and addressing potential issues before they become critical.
- **Enhanced communication.** Better collaboration among care teams leading to more consistent and cohesive care delivery.

Reconsider your approach

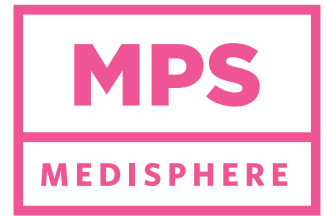
While task management systems can be effective in organising and tracking specific duties within aged care settings, they fail to deliver the comprehensive, coordinated care that residents require.

By shifting from a task-oriented to a more holistic approach, aged care providers can enhance the quality of care they deliver.

The right technology partner can help you implement more effective systems to ensure residents receive the person-centred, compassionate care they deserve.

Dr Charles Chang,
Founder & CEO, Acredia
acredia.com.au

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Digital advance care plans in residential aged care

A better way to support choice

Ensuring all residents in residential aged care have a complete advance care plan can be a challenging task – but it should not be left by the wayside.

Without this vital document, families or aged care managers are often forced to make difficult and rushed decisions during emergencies.

Even when a paper-based plan exists, finding it quickly can be a daunting task, especially when time is of the essence – but going digital can help.

Simplifying the creation of advance care plans

The traditional method of downloading, printing and completing advance care planning forms by hand is time-consuming and inefficient, while coordinating signatures and witnesses adds another layer of complexity.

If a resident changes their mind about any part of the plan, the process must start from scratch. Given the existing workforce strains in the aged care services industry, this cumbersome process can lead to these important plans being sidelined or avoided altogether.

By using a purpose-built digital and secure solution, the process can be streamlined significantly, ensuring that the most up-to-date version of an advance care plan is always accessible and can be securely shared with family, doctors and other trusted advisors.

This easy access reduces the risk of confusion and conflict when decisions about medical treatment need to be made.

Built-in guidance for aged care staff

Aged care staff may be inexperienced or hesitant to have the necessary conversations with residents to complete an advance care plan. While government



Dr Merran Cooper believes digital advance care planning helps people have important conversations about end-of-life care.

resources such as fact sheets exist, they often add to the paper clutter and can be easily misplaced.

Digital solutions, such as the Touchstone Life Care advance care planning platform, provide guided questions in a conversational format that is easy for both staff and residents to understand. This guided approach helps clarify residents' values and preferences for care, starting with gentle questions and progressing to more complex ones.

Touchstone Life Care's software also allows the user to save progress so that staff and residents can resume at their convenience. This flexibility ensures the process is thorough without being rushed, resulting in a more accurate and comprehensive result.

Secure and accessible anytime

In emergencies, as doctors often need quick access to vital information to make split-second decisions, lengthy paper forms become impractical; they can be easily misplaced and outdated versions may be the only ones available.

Digital advance care plans solve this problem by being accessible from anywhere at any time through QR codes, apps and integration with health records.

Touchstone Life Care's platform goes a step further by highlighting the most

critical information on the first page, making it easy for doctors to understand the necessary actions for priority.

Other important documents, such as care plans and medication lists, can also be uploaded to a digital platform, providing a single source of truth for all essential documents.

Ensuring compliance and future-proofing

Residential aged care providers have a duty of care to understand and fulfil each resident's advance care plan. This is reinforced in the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards, which state that advance care planning is integral to the aged care experience, and providers must be aware of their responsibilities.

Furthermore, recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission stated that aged care providers use digital care management systems interoperable with health records. This ensures that paramedics and other healthcare providers have access to up-to-date health information and advance care plans during emergencies.

Making the switch to digital

Aged care providers need a reliable system for advance care plans that is always up-to-date, legal and accessible.

Best-practice digital solutions support this need by integrating with existing clinical IT systems and offering comprehensive staff training. These systems ensure one-click compliance with accreditation requirements and are potentially eligible for tax rebates, making the transition cost-effective.

Platforms such as Touchstone Life Care simplify the creation and sharing of advance care plans, provide guided support for staff, ensure secure and timely access to vital information, and help providers meet compliance obligations.

By making the switch to digital, aged care providers can better support their residents' wishes, maintain compliance with their obligations and improve the overall quality of care.

**Dr Merran Cooper, Founder & CEO,
Touchstone Life Care
touchstonelifecare.com**

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It's time to assess your digital health

Why unlocking data is crucial to delivering smarter care for aged care clients

The aged care industry faces an unprecedented challenge in meeting the growing needs of an ageing population while contending with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and workforce shortages.

Recognising the seriousness of this challenge, the Australian Government's 2023 budget has allocated \$101.2 million over five years to support the development and adoption of digital health technologies across various industries.

This significant investment presents a unique opportunity for the aged care sector to leverage data and technology to optimise their operations and deliver the best for aged care clients.

The government's focus on 'Data and Digital Capabilities' in the budget shows that it clearly understands the profound impact these technologies can have on delivering the best for citizens, as well as driving growth and prosperity.

From working from home to online shopping, data-driven technologies have already transformed virtually every aspect of our lives.

But for the aged care sector, there is still much more that can be achieved. By investing in and embracing digital health technologies, aged care services can revolutionise care delivery, making it more efficient and cost-effective for better client outcomes.

The role of integrated data in overcoming blockages

While COVID-19 and staff shortages have undoubtedly contributed to the complexity of the health and aged care crisis, another less-reported cause lies in the disjointed nature of health and care data. The aged care sector is, of course, not alone in facing this challenge.

To address this issue, the government must take the lead in providing integrated solutions that foster better-connected data systems. There are already successful examples of successful B2G integrations, such as the DSS (Department of Social Services) Data Exchange, which has demonstrated the power of two-way information sharing between funding agencies and service providers.

Civica has invested in a real-time approach for providers to ease the burden of reporting manually or bulk file exports.

By adopting a similar approach of integrated data, the aged care sector can achieve smarter and more efficient ways of improving service delivery and understanding individual and community outcomes.

Real-time reporting because every minute counts

In a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, real-time reporting is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Timely access to accurate data is crucial for making informed decisions that can significantly impact client outcomes.

Aged care providers should embrace real-time reporting solutions that enable them to monitor and respond to critical information in a proactive and agile manner. By doing so, they can address potential issues before they escalate and ensure a higher quality of care for their clients.

Pioneering data-driven aged care solutions

As a global provider of GovTech, Civica helps organisations across a range of sectors make smarter use of their own data to deliver more for the people they serve. In the aged care sector, our Carelink Suite is eliminating the reliance on spreadsheets and paper-based forms and empowering care teams to access essential time and attendance schedules, rosters and client information securely from multiple devices.

This seamless integration of data and technology streamlines workflows, reduces administrative burden and facilitates more personalised care plans to improve overall efficiency and improving life for clients.

As the aged services industry faces an increasingly complex landscape, the government's budget commitment to data and digital capabilities is a beacon of hope. By seizing this opportunity, the sector can transform its operations, enhance client outcomes and deliver cost-effective care.

With integrated data systems and real-time reporting, the industry can achieve unprecedented levels of efficiency and quality, making the most of the digital health investment and steering the aged care sector toward a brighter, more sustainable future.

Francis McGahan, Sales Director of Care, Civica APAC
civica.com.au



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Building operational excellence in aged care through technology

The path you follow is important

For aged care providers the primary focus is always on delivering exceptional care and support to residents and clients, and today's technology innovations can be your helping hand – but you have to know how to use them.

In recent years, leveraging technology to improve care outcomes and investing in technology infrastructure has been a major focus.

According to *Harvard Organisation Review 2022*, "In the care industry, as well as across many other industries, digitally transforming the supply chain alone can reduce process costs by 50 per cent and increase revenue by 20 per cent."

While you might want to harness buzzwords like 'artificial intelligence', 'business process optimisation', and 'automation dominate discussions', they hold little meaning for aged care administration unless they are accompanied by tangible improvements that positively impact staff and residents.

Adopting the right technology means saving time, improving staff working conditions, attracting more customers and enhancing governance while building a sustainable future – these are the essential features of operational excellence in aged care.

How to choose the right technology and partner

To create actionable solutions, you must assess whether the software on offer is an integrated aged care software and whether the technology partner has experience with the aged care services industry and your specific needs.

The software should manage the range of functions you deliver – including marketing, administration, client care, procurement, document management and finance management – in a single platform.

A solution that supports the facility's growth without the need for constant upgrades is vital.

An ideal software system should have open APIs (Application Programming Interface) for seamless integration with other systems, providing the flexibility to manage all data in a single source and enabling a proactive approach to care needs and informed decision-making.

The right solution should also maximise productivity through process automation, efficient data management, and streamlined reporting and analysis.

The following checklist will help you make the best choice of technology and technology partner for your operations:

1. **Understand the day-to-day operations.** Your partner should comprehend your unique needs and daily operational environment.
2. **Identify challenges and software suitability.** Your partner should analyse key challenges and ensure the selected software meets your specific needs. Prioritise tasks that directly impact the team and overall care quality.
3. **Enhance productivity through automation.** Your solution should introduce automation to streamline processes, drive operational excellence and minimise disruptions.
4. **Build workflows and documentation.** Software should be able to create efficient workflows, conduct analysis and provide resolution documentation tailored to the business.
5. **Develop training materials.** You should be able to document processes and access training materials to facilitate smooth onboarding and usage.
6. **Minimise costs and ensure accessibility.** Solutions should be accessed on any device, ensuring flexibility and cost-effectiveness.
7. **Protect against vulnerabilities.** Your product should shield the business from cyber threats, while empowering

it with knowledge and tools to handle future challenges.

8. **Focus on sustainability.** Leverage evolving technology solutions that offer continuous updates and enhancements to meet future needs.

How to ensure a smooth transition

While the right technology is vital, the pathway you take is equally important.

Consider how new systems will resonate with management, who must navigate regulatory changes, integrate new funding models and navigate new technology frameworks.

Think about the impact on the rest of your staff, including direct care workers, particularly if there has been a period of ongoing change. This can lead to 'change fatigue' and 'task overload', which can make achieving financial and operational excellence more challenging.

To ensure a smooth transition to new technology, it's crucial to introduce technological enablement and new solution implementations gradually. Administrative staff need time to gain confidence in using software tools that simplify their tasks.

Ultimately, achieving the highest standards of care requires a responsible technology service provider partner, so you can be guided with expert advice.

Innovating through technology doesn't need to be a major financial leap. Instead, it should be a strategically planned digital transformation journey.

By implementing technology in phases and with proper guidance, aged care providers can ensure transparency, make strategic decisions and reduce unnecessary burdens on staff.

This phased approach allows staff the flexibility to adapt to new trends without being overwhelmed, while also improving care delivery.

Garima Sharma,
Director – Operations, SoftLabs
softlabs.com.au/erp-for-care

Curtin Heritage Living's innovative approach secures top industry award

Cottesloe redevelopment best-in-class

At the recent Urban Development Institute of Australia (Western Australia) awards event, Curtin Heritage Living's Cottesloe redevelopment was not just named winner of the Seniors Accommodation category, but in a first for an aged care precinct, it was awarded the prestigious overall Russell Perry Award for Excellence in Development – outclassing developments across all other categories.

This impressive achievement is the result of meticulous planning, purposeful architecture, stunning design, masterful finishes, and a passionate vision for the effortless facilitation of community integration.

"As a smaller operator we have the freedom to do things a bit differently," said Curtin Heritage Living Managing Director David Cox.

"We've travelled extensively throughout Australia and internationally to find innovative ways to enhance the aged care experience and create something that would appeal to discerning consumers of the future.

"We're always looking for ways to experiment, learn from others and find evidence-based initiatives we can apply here in Perth."

Originally chairman of the board at Curtin, David has been in his role as Managing Director for six years and has spearheaded incredible transformation and expansion.

When he came into the job in 2018, all employees were third party staff, so he immediately went on a mammoth recruitment drive to secure 200 permanent employees. Today there are almost 500.

The not-for-profit has acquired a home care arm, 'Shine', and has transformed the original Cottesloe site from traditional aged care home to a stunning bespoke aged care and commercial precinct.

"For our Cottesloe redevelopment, we engaged five different architects, two of them with international expertise, because we wanted to create excellence across each of our offerings," said David.

"We didn't want to be constrained by current legislation and operating requirements, we know the model of the future will be driven by consumer demand so we wanted to create spaces that people would choose to live in."

The result is residential care rooms that look more like one-bedroom apartments, most with enough space for a living area and a kitchenette in addition to a bedroom and ensuite. There is



The heritage building now services community amenities and attracts events including weddings.



Quality finishes feature throughout the development, including the residential aged care lobby.



Resident spaces like this dining room mirror the blue chip suburb.



Independent living apartments offer spectacular views.

also potential to join two rooms together, and all rooms can be locked from the inside to ensure resident privacy.

To maintain resident safety, every room is fitted with Artificial Intelligence technology, including movement detectors so that staff can be alerted to any significant change in behaviour, such as a fall. They also still have medical beds, nurse call buttons and ceiling hoists.

In the Waterfront Cottesloe independent living apartments there are two- and three-bedroom options, with service offerings on-demand and as required, and stunning views of Cottesloe beach.

All apartments from residential care to independent living have been classified 'nursing home beds' to allow for flexibility in the future and meaning people can truly 'age in place'.

The inclusions across the entire site are very high-end consistent with the blue ribbon aspirational appeal of the Cottesloe area.

Pre-existing heritage buildings have been restored to create beautiful spaces that facilitate community activity. They include an award-winning restaurant, luxurious club lounge, arts makers space and art gallery, and medical centre.

"People from the community come here and don't realise it's an aged care site, they just come here because of the reviews or the stunning facilities," said David.

"We even had a group from Hong Kong exhibit their jewellery collection here because they loved the venue."

Curtin Heritage Living also plays a role in the wider community through its benevolent activities, such as working with the local councils to run seniors' week events which include high teas and movie nights at the Cottesloe site, and also supporting local disability providers with various events.

"We have many touch points with the local community and that integration is really important not just because we want our residents and clients to continue to connect with their community, but also because the people we connect with are likely to be our customers of the future," said David.

"Our site and the way we activate it is the best referral service we could want."

Another interesting thing about Curtin Heritage Living is that their staff are integrated across all sites – residential care, independent living and home care.

"We organise our staff around the services they provide, such as allied health, and then those teams operate across all sites and activities," said David.

"It breathes life into our staff and helps support our very high retention rate."

At the end of the day, when the sun is setting over the beach in the west, the real proof of success is the response from the target market, which has been nothing short of outstanding.

At Curtin's Cottesloe redevelopment, all apartments are fully occupied, with stage two selling in three weeks and more than 200 people on a wait list for the independent living apartments alone.

"Our vision was to create a great place where people want to live, that was vibrant and an activated extension of the community, not just a nice aged care home," said David.

"It's really wonderful to see that coming together."

Linda Baracioli,
Aged Care Today Editor and Communications Advisor,
Aged & Community Care Providers Association
curtinheritage.com.au



Stunning Summerhill home

Clayton Church creates the hearth of the community

In March this year, South Australia's Clayton Church Homes was delighted to open the doors to its newest 28-million-dollar offering – Summerhill in Uraidla in the Adelaide Hills.

Complimenting the rolling hills and quiet township, the meticulously designed 60-bed aged care home is intentionally single-level and arranged as a small house model.

Each small home can cater for up to 10 people, including singles and couples, with ensuite bedrooms, lounge area and kitchen.

The eight individual homes are designed to look very much like private residences, with no hint of institutionalised living.

All homes are interconnected through a central area where communal spaces are located, including common activity areas, consulting rooms, dining rooms, a commercial kitchen, hairdresser and gymnasium.

Energy saving inclusions like solar power mean long-term reduced energy costs for the site and a smaller carbon footprint.

The stunning surrounds of vineyards, cherry orchards and hilltops cradling native vegetation informed the design aesthetic, which features natural elements and organic textures like extensive timber panelling and stonework.

Enormous skylights feature in the grand entry and reception area features, while throughout the entire build floor to ceiling windows allow connection with the outdoors with beautiful vistas.

At Summerhill, connectedness and community are strong themes.

"Most of our residents are from the Hills district and we wanted to make sure they remain engaged with their

community both visually and in other ways," said Jo Boylan, CEO of Clayton Church Homes and a former registered nurse with more than 20 years' experience in executive leadership positions in aged care.

"Summerhill is really about a harmonious connection with the outdoors and the places our residents call home.

"Our staff are also from the local area which helps maintain a sense of closeness and togetherness.

"We're currently developing our community engagement program to encourage more interaction between our residents and the wider community, because we now have some wonderful facilities we can offer to everyone."

Ideas for community engagement include inviting volunteers to develop the garden, which has already been designed but elements like the vegetable garden still need to be planted, as well as connecting with artists.

The on-site gymnasium, café and hairdresser will be open to anyone, with the on-site exercise physiologist set to plan structured activities at the gymnasium for older people in the community who can utilise the facilities through their home care packages.

Catering for the whole person, Summerhill residents also benefit from regular visits from the local GP, while the local pharmacist will also have an important role to play, located only 200 metres away in the Uraidla village shopping district.

Local community-minded groups like Imagine Uraidla will be a source of ideas and further advancement of community engagement activities, while the on-site children's playground will be a source of enjoyment for younger visitors.

"At Clayton Church Homes we're very focused on providing high-quality services to the older people of South Australia," said Jo.

“Summerhill is a testament to that, it’s both visually stunning and capable of meeting the needs of people as they age in a manner that is consistent with their way of life.

“It’s a community of gardeners, artists and foodies, and we aim to support that in everything we do.”

Summerhill was designed by Mario Dreosti, Managing Director of Brown Falconer architects in Adelaide and built by Kennett Builders, whose intricate attention to detail particularly the stonemasonry won them a Master Builders SA award in 2024.

Mario says the project was conceived as a village on a hill, with the design based on a comprehensive engagement process and a cultural mapping of the local context.

“An Adelaide Hills vernacular informed the building form and materiality and the potential to host pop up events, particularly celebrating a bread making history for both colonial settlers and earlier that of the Peramangk people who ground kangaroo grass seeds,” he said.

“This influenced the design of the multiple purpose space, alfresco dining and adjacent nature play area.

“The series of distinct ‘small houses’ are purposefully connected by a central main street spine which journeys through the public facing venue space to the productive gardens, gym, hairdresser and other common spaces.

“The architecture and the care model are founded on the principles of offering engagement and enablement in activities and pursuits which are connected to place and a sense of social context.”

Linda Baraciolli,
***Aged Care Today* Editor and Communications Advisor,**
Aged & Community Care Providers Association
claytonhomes.com.au; brownfalconer.com.au



Each small house includes its own domestic kitchen.



Summerhill sits harmoniously atop a hill in the Adelaide Hills district.



Organic elements like extensive wood panelling create a warm ambience.

The seven metrics for asset maintenance

Stay ahead of the curve with a proactive approach

Having an effective asset maintenance system is a no-brainer – it reduces emergency costs, avoids service downtime and minimises disruptions to your residents' living environment.

But which asset metrics should you track to ensure nothing is missed, check your system is working effectively and most importantly, improving over time?

MDFM – Australia's experts in aged care facility maintenance – recommends monitoring seven key metrics for the best results.

1. Requests by job type, service type, site and status

What types of requests are taking up most of your maintenance time? Is it hanging picture frames or unblocking drains? Mainly electrical or mainly plumbing? How many requests are raised at each of your sites, and how does this compare to the size and condition of each?

Your answers to these questions will offer insights to better manage internal resources and easily identify any need to outsource the areas of maintenance where your team needs additional support.

2. Requests by month

Review your maintenance requests on a monthly basis so you can identify any seasonal patterns. This will help you schedule preventative maintenance tasks in the quieter months.

We often see May and November with the highest volume of maintenance requests. Perhaps as the weather starts to cool down and warm up, there is a change in the equipment used or it is used differently.

If you're tracking the right metrics, you can capitalise on this information by taking proactive action, such as scheduling your

heavy air conditioning service just before those peak reporting periods.

3. Average days taken to complete requests

Ideally you can filter this metric by request type, to ensure that higher risk assets stay under an acceptable threshold, as well as monitoring overall response time.

Compare this to previous time periods or compare personnel to measure their productivity. Why might there be differences at each site? Look at each status from 'open', 'in progress', 'completed' and 'closed'.

You may also need to consider the number raised versus the number closed in a particular period. If those numbers are close together that's a good sign that your team is getting through the requests in an efficient manner.

4. Overdue works

It's critical to analyse why tasks aren't being done on time, by looking at the number of work orders completed past the due date and the overdue preventative maintenance works.

Are your targets too optimistic, or is there an issue with how these work orders are being managed? Maybe some staff aren't engaging with the system enough and leaving things open? Do they have the right training they need for proper documentation and recording?

Your system is only as good as how you interact with it. Consider how the analysis changes if you remove the status between completing the job and closing it following payment of the contractor.

5. Missing service reports

Service reports are critical for your compliance and asset history. MDFM has eliminated the issue of missing service reports for their aged care

clients through our robust asset management process.

We don't close work orders until we have received a service report. And we don't pay contractors without it. This has made a big difference to the compliance and peace of mind of our clients' facilities.

6. Identify assets due for replacement by condition rating

One of the most powerful tools in a digital asset management system is understanding what assets will need to be replaced and hence budgeted for in the near future (the next one to three years).

With visibility over the assets that are ageing, you can assess the condition of those specific assets to make informed decisions on what should be replaced before failure.

Engage your contractors to perform a condition assessment of assets they are servicing assets that are coming up to end of life, and give them a condition rating to keep track.

You'll be surprised by the reduction in headaches for your team and residents once your system flags assets that should be replaced before they fail.

7. Contractor Service Level Agreement (SLA) rankings

Are your contractors responding in an appropriate timeframe? Your system should show you who is not meeting their agreed response time and may need to be replaced.

This metric has given our clients great leverage to negotiate their service contracts, and ensure they are working with contractors as passionate about service and safety as they are.

Joshua Jermyn, FM & Projects Manager, MDFM
mdfm.com.au



Embracing biophilic design in aged care

Principles, applications and benefits

In recent years, the principles of biophilic design have gained traction across various industries, including aged care – but what is it and what are the benefits?

Principles of biophilic design

Biophilic design is a concept that emphasises human connection to nature and integrates natural elements into built environments, which has shown significant benefits in enhancing the wellbeing of individuals.

The principles of biophilic design can be categorised into three main areas:

1. **Nature in the space.** This principle involves the direct presence of natural elements within the built environment. Examples include incorporating plants, water features and natural light. These elements can be used in communal areas, individual rooms and outdoor spaces to create a visually and sensory stimulating environment.
2. **Natural analogues.** These are representations of nature that evoke the essence of natural elements without being direct representations. They include natural materials, patterns and colours that mimic nature.
3. **Nature of the space.** This principle refers to the spatial configurations that evoke a sense of being in nature. It includes creating spaces with dynamic and diffuse light, open views and sensory variability. Designing spaces that offer refuge, mystery and a sense of exploration can also contribute to a biophilic environment.

Incorporating biophilic design in aged care spaces

Implementing biophilic design in aged care homes requires a thoughtful approach to integrate nature seamlessly into

the living environment. Here are several ways to incorporate these principles:

1. **Natural light and views.** Maximising natural light and providing views of nature can significantly enhance residents' mood and circadian rhythms. Large windows, skylights and strategically placed communal areas can ensure residents have ample exposure to daylight and outdoor views.
2. **Indoor plants and green walls.** Introducing indoor plants and green walls can improve air quality and provide a calming atmosphere. Select low-maintenance plants that thrive indoors and are safe for residents. Consider creating indoor gardens where residents can engage with plants and nature.
3. **Water features.** Incorporating water features such as fountains, aquariums or even small indoor ponds can create a soothing and tranquil environment. The sound of running water can be particularly beneficial in reducing stress and promoting relaxation.
4. **Natural materials and textures.** Using natural materials like wood, stone and bamboo in furniture, flooring and decor can create a warm and inviting atmosphere. Textures that mimic natural elements, such as leaf patterns or wave-like designs, can enhance the sensory experience.
5. **Outdoor spaces.** Designing accessible and inviting outdoor spaces, such as gardens, patios and walking paths, allows residents to connect with nature directly. These areas can be used for various activities, including gardening, socialising and exercising.

Compliance with aged care standards

Incorporating biophilic design in aged care homes aligns with the Aged Care Quality Standards, which focus on providing

safe, effective and high-quality care to residents. Here's how biophilic design can support compliance:

1. **Consumer dignity and choice.** Biophilic design promotes a sense of autonomy and empowerment by creating environments that residents find engaging and stimulating. Access to nature and personalised spaces can enhance residents' dignity and quality of life.
2. **Ongoing assessment and planning.** Regularly incorporating feedback from residents and staff about their interactions with biophilic elements ensures the environment continues to meet their needs and preferences, aligning with standards for continuous improvement.
3. **Personal care and clinical care.** Natural light and access to outdoor spaces can improve physical health, aid in sleep regulation and enhance mental wellbeing.
4. **Services and supports for daily living.** Integrating biophilic design can create spaces that encourage physical activity, social interaction and engagement in daily activities, enhancing residents' ability to live independently.
5. **Service environment.** Creating a homely and supportive environment using natural elements means the physical surroundings contribute to residents' comfort and wellbeing.

Benefits of biophilic design in aged care

The integration of biophilic design in aged care homes offers numerous benefits for both residents and staff:

1. **Enhanced wellbeing.** Exposure to natural elements has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. It can also improve mood, cognitive function and overall wellbeing.
2. **Improved health.** Natural light helps regulate circadian rhythms, which can improve sleep patterns and overall health. Access to nature and green spaces can also encourage physical activity.
3. **Increased engagement:** Biophilic design can stimulate sensory experiences and encourage social interactions. Residents are more likely to engage in communal activities and interact with their environment, leading to increased socialisation.
4. **Staff satisfaction:** A well designed, nature-integrated environment can benefit staff by reducing stress and burnout. Staff working in biophilic environments often report higher job satisfaction and improved mental health, leading to better care for residents.

**Jo Caughtry, Creative Director Sea of Ideas Design;
Board Member Biophilic Cities Australia
seaofideasdesign.com**

smith+tracey architects celebrates award winning aged care & senior living architecture



St Vincent's Care Services Kew

Top 40, Think Brick Awards 2023 'UNEARTHED'
Finalist at the 10th Asia Pacific Eldercare
Innovation Awards 2022



BASScare Morgan Glen Iris

Winner Boroondara Urban Design Award 2023
Finalist at the 10th Asia Pacific Eldercare
Innovation Awards 2022



Chirnside Views Aged Care

Finalist at the 12th Asia Pacific Eldercare
Innovation Awards 2024



This year, smith+tracey architects celebrate 75 years of practice. During this period we have developed a major presence and awareness within the seniors living, aged care, community and education sectors. We welcome the opportunity to continue our contribution in achieving better designed outcomes for senior living environments.

smith+tracey architects

www.smithtracey.com.au

75 ARCHITECTS
SINCE 1948
Years

Aged Care Week – News: CCI Services

Since its inception in 1976, CCI has been dedicated to delivering savings and efficiencies to Australia's not for profit sector. As a not for profit themselves, CCI understand the challenges of driving the dollar further in the NFP sector to enable a greater good to be delivered in communities across Australia.

Russell Schrale, CEO says "CCI has over 270 likeminded not for profit members located across Australia. What the membership offers is the ability to come together with the collective buying power of all members our negotiations with suppliers across 19 categories that we have on offer."

Russell concludes by saying "the mission of CCI is to empower the greater good, and we're proud to support our aged & home care members to provide for their communities."

To find out more how a CCI membership can amplify your impact visit: cciservices.org.au

Goldman Plumbing is celebrating sixty remarkable years of dedicated service nationwide!

Proudly serving QLD, NSW, VIC and SA Goldman Plumbing is an industry leader providing top tier plumbing solutions throughout the Health and Aged Care sectors.



Whilst our expertise spans all sectors, our unparalleled knowledge of hot and warm water systems, water quality management and legionella bacteria control is why we are at the forefront in providing safe and reliable plumbing systems to Aged Care Facilities across Australia.

From design to installation and ongoing maintenance, Goldman Plumbing leads the way in hydraulic services, with over five hundred Health and Aged Care facilities currently benefiting from our services. We test, service and maintain in excess of five thousand Thermostatic Mixing Valves and Backflow Prevention Devices annually.

Contact Goldman Plumbing today to discover how our 60 years of knowledge and experience can benefit your organisation.

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Two new Eden education offerings include:

"Leadership – Elevating the Science into an Art". This is a the 2 day workshop. The focus of this course is to define person centred leadership, your role as a leader and community builder.

"Person Centred Hospitality (H.A.R.T) a 1 day workshop exploring the opportunities and challenges of providing a person centred hospitality service in residential and community care environments. We explore Quality Standard 5 under the new strengthened Standards, providing practical solutions that work.

We teach it, you empower it, they live it....

www.edeninoz.com.au

Baptcare has been providing care for nearly 80 years, making a meaningful difference across a diverse range of support, care, community and residential services. It has grown to become one of Victoria's largest aged care providers, offering services supporting in-home and community living in both Victoria and Tasmania while also delivering accommodation types to suit everyone. Baptcare is an inspiring community that is always striving to improve and has been developing its sites to offer a large variety of services.

Baptcare's new Retirement Living sites – Baptcare Strathalan, Baptcare The Orchards and Baptcare Peninsula View - encourage community interaction and active lifestyles. Their community hubs are fitted with senior friendly gyms using HUR air-based strength training equipment.

Many residents are regular gym users. The safety of the HUR equipment encourages everyone to join in – even first-time visitors – and is another wonderful example of a Baptcare service that supports their retirement living residents to make the most of living life their way.

You can find out more about Baptcare's retirement living communities on their website:

<https://www.baptcare.org.au/retirement-living-communities/>



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