

Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy

Submission

10 July 2023



About ACCPA

The Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) is the national Industry Association for aged care providers offering retirement living, seniors housing, residential care, home care, community care and related services.

ACCPA exists to unite aged care providers under a shared vision to enhance the wellbeing of older Australians through a high performing, trusted and sustainable aged care sector. We support our members to provide high quality care and services while amplifying their views and opinions through an authoritative and comprehensive voice to the government, community, and media.

Our sector serves to make better lives for older Australians, and so do we.

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Background

On 28 May 2023, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced the public consultation of the *Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy* (Draft National Strategy) saying that, ‘The Strategy focuses holistically on improving the quality of care and support jobs within four key sectors – early childhood education and care, disability support, veterans’ care and aged care.’

As part of this announcement, four pivotal aspects of the Draft National Strategy were identified:

1. how government investment in these sectors is as effective as it can be so that it supports Australians’ quality of life and our economic productivity and prosperity;
2. that these sectors are growing contributors to our national economy, with demand for care and support services on the rise;
3. as they continue to grow, care and support sectors will be fundamental to providing jobs, supporting workforce participation and improving our national productivity; and
4. securing the future of the care and support economy will ensure Australians can receive the high quality services they need.

As the peak industry body representing aged care providers in Australia, one of four sub-sectors of the care and support economy, ACCPA has a strong interest in the opportunities identified by this National Strategy. Aged care also has significant links to other sub-sectors including veterans care and disability. ACCPA is pleased to submit our response to this consultation.

Executive summary

Overall, ACCPA welcomes the development of a National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy and is supportive of the proposed conceptualisation to include the aged care sector, alongside other sub-sectors for disability, veterans care and early childhood education and care.

ACCPA believes that the data, insights and experiences of our members, will assist in informing policy development related to the vision for a care and support economy in Australia.

In summary, ACCPA is broadly supportive of the three goals identified in the Draft National Strategy:

- Goal 1: Quality care and support
- Goal 2: Decent jobs
- Goal 3: Productive and sustainable

ACCPA also makes a range of recommendations regarding the Draft National Strategy and related policy work, including that:

- further social and economic analysis of each sub-sector be undertaken;
- there be further articulation of the necessary components to achieve high quality care across the care and support economy and that these be incorporated into the final National Strategy;
- there be consideration of the interplay between various migration levers on the different skill levels of workforce required in the care and support economy, as part of Australia's future migration system;
- there is strong support of the importance of pay and conditions as well as the possibility of new funding programs to support leadership across the care and support economy; and
- future policy work includes consideration on the role of consumer co-contributions and an improved regulatory environment.

ACCPA also notes that the Draft National Strategy acknowledges the need for a national conversation on long-term sustainability, including the relative contribution between governments and individuals. ACCPA will actively participate in the Aged Care Taskforce over coming months, which will include deliberation on similar issues and questions within the context of the aged care sector. We will share our contributions on these important issues across both processes.

Summary of recommendations

- R1** That PM&C release further details regarding the development of proposed Action Plans as part of the final National Strategy, including principles for sector engagement.
- R2** That the Roadmap acknowledge key drivers of aged care reform as part of the final National Strategy, including the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report, the Aged Care Taskforce and a new Aged Care Act.
- R3** That further social and economic analysis of each sub-sector, including aged care, be undertaken to strengthen the understanding of the respective contribution and dynamics, and how these can be harnessed for future policy work.
- R4** That further articulation of the necessary components to achieve high quality care across the care and support economy be incorporated into the final National Strategy. This should include consideration of:
 - a) the need for a definition of high quality care (based on extensive consultation);
 - b) appropriate financial system settings (and requisite funding) to deliver on the agreed definition of high quality care;
 - c) the criticality of access to the necessary workforce supply in attaining high quality care; and
 - d) the importance of transformational change programs and associated funding to achieve a desired future state.
- R5** That the Draft National Strategy build on its existing discussion of migration to build linkages with Australia's migration system policy development currently underway. This could include considering the interplay of various migration levers on the different skill levels of workforce required in the care and support economy.
- R6** That acknowledgement of the need to ensure cultural safety of care delivery services for First Nations people is also supported through non community-controlled organisations in the final National Strategy.
- R7** That in addition to existing initiatives to support informal carers and improve system navigation and access, well-designed, nuanced and flexible respite programs be developed throughout the care and support economy sector, including aged care.
- R8** That PM&C consider the feedback from ACCPA members when undertaking further policy work on the relative role played by each of the objectives identified in the Draft National Strategy. This consideration should note the strong support of the importance of pay and conditions as well as the possibility of new funding programs to support leadership across the care and support economy.
- R9** That PM&C consider the feedback from ACCPA members when undertaking further policy work on the relative role played by each of the objectives identified in the Draft National Strategy for a productive and sustainable care and support economy. This should include a particular focus on the role of consumer co-contributions and an improved regulatory environment.

1. Introduction

Overall, ACCPA welcomes the development of a National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy and is supportive of the proposed conceptualisation to include the aged care sector, alongside other sub-sectors.

1.1 Roadmap - The National Care and Support Economy Strategy 2023

ACCPA acknowledges the development of the Draft National Strategy by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) and sees significant potential in coordination across government portfolios, as well as Federal-State-Local Government spheres, to develop aligned policy responses. We believe that the Draft National Strategy should expand on this opportunity.

ACCPA also notes the reference to the development of several Action Plans as part of progressing the Draft National Strategy. It is, however, difficult to comment on whether the proposed action plans will be sufficient in scope or approach without further detail, including sector engagement in their development.

Recommendation 1: That PM&C release further details regarding the development of proposed Action Plans as part of the final National Strategy, including principles for sector engagement.

ACCPA notes the reference in the Roadmap to ‘Upcoming complementary strategies, reports and reviews’ and notes there is a gap regarding key drivers of the significant aged care reform already underway, including:

- Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report, March 2021¹
- Aged Care Taskforce (announced in June 2023)²
- A new Aged Care Act (scheduled for exposure draft consultation release in December 2023)³

Recommendation 2: That the Roadmap acknowledge key drivers of aged care reform as part of the final National Strategy, including the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report, the Aged Care Taskforce and a new Aged Care Act.

1.2 Introduction: Care and support in Australia

The interpretation of the data presented in the Draft National Strategy is compelling in relation to the care and support sector’s contribution and connectedness to the Australian economy. It also serves to highlight the opportunity to strengthen and optimise this over coming decades.

ACCPA concurs with the acknowledgement that this is a ‘rapid growth sector’.⁴

As a sector largely funded by the Australian Government, projected expenditure illustrates this point. Treasury’s 2021 Intergenerational Report noted that ‘*aged care spending is expected to increase substantially as a share of the economy, from 1.2 per cent of GDP in*

¹ [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report](#), (March 2021)

² [Aged Care Taskforce](#), (June 2023)

³ [New Aged Care Act](#), (scheduled for consultation on exposure draft in December 2023 as per [Aged Care Roadmap](#))

⁴ [Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy](#), p.8.

2020-21 to 2.1 per cent of GDP in 2060-61 (or \$113 billion in 2020-21 dollars).’ This is noted as reflecting population growth and ageing, as the baby boomer generation enters aged care eligibility age, and non-demographic factors. This will nearly double its current share of the economy.⁵

This growth is also reflected in the aged care workforce. In 2016, the Aged Care Workforce Census identified 366,000 paid workers in this sub-sector of the care and support economy.⁶ By the next Aged Care Workforce Census undertaken in 2020, this had grown to 434,000 paid workers.⁷

Furthermore, ACCPA notes the Draft National Strategy observation that the historical treatment of this sector has lacked recognition of its economic contribution.

‘The care and support economy is a significant contributor to employment, economic growth and societal well-being in Australia. Yet, care and support work has not traditionally been considered by governments through an economic policy lens, resulting in its associated economic benefits often being neglected.’⁸

The Draft National Strategy identifies a range of social and economic benefits that can be driven by the care and support economy with the right settings and support. Many of these are also reflective of the aged care sector, which has a highly feminised workforce.

The Draft National Strategy identifies the role of investment in social infrastructure. The aged care sub-sector also substantially contributes to social infrastructure with investment in the development and renewal of residential aged care facilities across Australia.

ACCPA considers that more detailed economic analysis of the contribution and dynamics of each sub-sector will strengthen the overall policy work behind a care and support economy, whether that be for the final National Strategy, or as part of a progression of work arising from the Strategy.

Further analysis on the social determinants of health and wellbeing that may be driving needs across the care and support economy into the future may also be valuable for articulating the scale and nature of demand (and the relative roles played by preventative health, community health and mental health among others).

ACCPA also supports the recognition of First Nations people and communities being explicitly referenced and considered throughout this Draft National Strategy.

Recommendation 3: That further social and economic analysis of each sub-sector, including aged care, be undertaken to strengthen the understanding of the respective contribution and dynamics, and how these can be harnessed for future policy work.

1.3 Vision

ACCPA notes the vision for the Draft National Strategy of ‘a sustainable and productive care and support economy that delivers quality care and support with decent jobs,’ is essentially a summation of three objectives being:

- Goal 1: Quality care and support
- Goal 2: Decent jobs
- Goal 3: Productive and sustainable

ACCPA’s submission covers each of these three Goals and notes recommendations for consideration as part of finalising the National Strategy.

⁵ Treasury, [2021 Intergenerational Report](#), p. 104 and p.xii.

⁶ As reported in the [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Final Report](#), (March 2021), p.63

⁷ Department of Health, [2020 Aged Care Workforce Census Report](#) (September 2021), p.6

⁸ [Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy](#), p.8.

2. Goal 1: Quality care and support

ACCPA strongly supports the policy goal for ‘person-centred services that recognise those accessing care and support as individuals and deliver quality outcomes’ as well as the following objectives:

1. People have access to the care and support they need
2. The workforce has the right skills and training to deliver quality care and support
3. Workforce supply meets demand
4. Services are culturally and psychologically safe for all people
5. People are able to easily navigate systems, assess service quality and access care and support
6. The contribution of informal carers is valued, and they are supported to sustain their caring roles

We consider this description of objectives to be the most well-articulated and developed of the three goals in the Draft National Strategy, while also noting areas where this goal could be strengthened.

2.1 High quality care

The Draft National Strategy recognises the importance of high quality care in the care and support economy.

In the context of aged care, this is currently the subject of significant policy development with a recent Department of Health consultation paper on *A new model for regulating aged care: Consultation Paper 2*, providing the first public indication of priorities for a definition for high quality care (which is to be subject to further consultation ahead of inclusion of a definition in the new Aged Care Act).⁹

In our submission to the consultation paper, we recommended that high quality care should be clearly and objectively explained for each aged care service type, to allow for mutual understanding and consistent application (including how high quality care in thin markets will be supported). We also highlighted that providers will need sufficient, reliable and timely access to workforce supply and support for ongoing workforce professional development to deliver high quality care. There will also need to be continued recognition and support for the role of informal carers in supporting care recipients.¹⁰

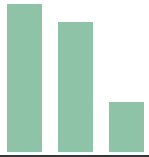
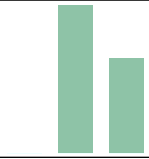
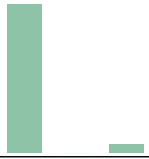
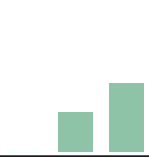
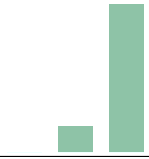
Further, policy work relevant to high quality care is also the subject of other initiatives including the Aged Care Taskforce and the pricing and costing functions of the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority and in the aged care sub sector, harmonisation across these initiatives will be critical.

In a recent survey of ACCPA members on the future sustainability of aged care (which received 123 responses), two questions were posed about achieving high quality care.

⁹ Department of Health and Aged Care, [A New Model for Regulating Aged Care Consultation Paper 2](#), p.52.

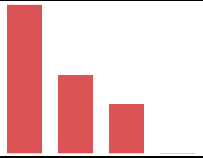
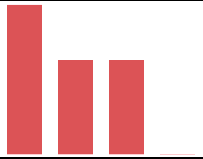

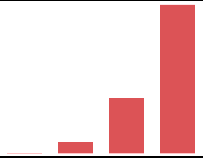
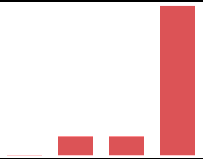
¹⁰ Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA), [A new model for regulating aged care: Consultation Paper 2 – Submission](#) (23 June 2023), p.17-18.

What system-wide supports would you need as a provider to attain the high quality care 'priorities' identified above? (Rank in order of importance)

System Wide Support to Attain High Quality Care	1	1 to 5	5	Most Common Ranking
Accurate costing of the provision of 'high quality care' (including via processes of the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority in recommending price settings to Government)	Most Important		Least Important	1
System design, linked to funding, that recognises the nuances of care provided in residential aged care facilities and in home aged care	Most Important		Least Important	2
A definition of high quality care in legislation that is clear, attainable and funded	Most Important		Least Important	1
A modernised regulatory environment that cultivates continuous improvement and does not stifle innovation	Most Important		Least Important	5
Harmonised policy settings across Aged Care Quality Standards and other reform measures that ensure consistency of expectations for what is high quality care	Most Important		Least Important	4

In considering the highest ranked responses, ACCPA notes that definition, funding, pricing and costing of high quality care was considered most important by our members. Aged care providers are responsible for delivering high quality care and services in a person-centred way and therefore need the confidence to know that such care clearly expressed, is attainable through accurate costings and a funding system that will sustain it.

What sector level supports would you need as a provider to attain the high quality care 'priorities' identified above? (Rank in order of importance)

Sector Level Support to Attain High Quality Care	1	1 to 5	5	Most Common Ranking
Sufficient, reliable and timely access to workforce supply (across the range of care roles and related professions involved in support aged care)	Most Important		Least Important	1
A clear plan, roadmap and associated transformation funding support for any sector change	Most Important		Least Important	1
Support for ongoing workforce professional development via provision of sector best practice training programs and the funding to implement them	Most Important		Least Important	2 & 3
Accountability and transparency measures (including efficient and effective reporting systems) that support consumer choice and sector excellence	Most Important		Least Important	5
Recognition and support for the role of informal carers in supporting older people in Australia	Most Important		Least Important	5

In considering the highest ranked responses, ACCPA notes that access to workforce supply and a transformation roadmap, with associated funding support, was of most importance to members. These results are a reflection of the importance of labour as a significant component of aged care service delivery. It also reflects the implementation experience of members over the first two years of reform since the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was handed down. ACCPA members cannot deliver high quality aged care without a stable workforce, and would benefit from specific planning and funding for transformation.

While these questions are within the context of aged care reform, they are informative for the care and support economy as they go to the heart of consumer expectations of the care and support system, and the capacity of those delivering care to provide it.

ACCPA therefore believes that *Figure 5 - High level quality care and support experience* in the Draft National Strategy should be further developed, or another figure should be introduced to acknowledge the importance of defining high quality care and ensuring adequate funding to deliver high quality care.¹¹

Recommendation 4: That further articulation of the necessary components to achieve high quality care across the care and support economy be incorporated into the final National Strategy. This should include consideration of:

- a) the need for a definition of high quality care (based on extensive consultation);**

¹¹ [Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy](#), p.16.

- b) appropriate financial system settings (and requisite funding) to deliver on the agreed definition of high quality care;**
- c) the criticality of access to the necessary workforce supply in attaining high quality care; and**
- d) the importance of transformational change programs and associated funding to achieve a desired future state.**

2.2 Migration

The Draft National Strategy identifies that 53% of workers in residential aged care are migrants and that, given Australia's current tight labour market, migration is likely to continue to be part of the solution to workforce shortages across the care and support economy.

The Draft National Strategy references the recently announced Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement (ACILA) and the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM Scheme) as other migration pathways.

It is imperative that these schemes are considered in the context of the whole migration system, and how skilled and lower skilled workers can be part of the workforce solution for the care and support economy.

In April 2023, the Department of Home Affairs released a discussion paper outlining its consideration of a series of directions for significant reform of the migration system, which will be consulted on, and refined, before releasing a final strategy later this year.¹²

ACCPA is currently monitoring the implementation of the ACILA and PALM Scheme and considers there are further opportunities to align the role of the migration workforce with the possible migration levers that might be refined or developed for all skill levels.

Recommendation 5: That the Draft National Strategy build on its existing discussion of migration to build linkages with Australia's migration system policy development currently underway. This could include considering the interplay of various migration levers on the different skill levels of workforce required in the care and support economy.

2.3 First Nations care and support

The Draft National Strategy observes the following:

*"In rural and remote areas and for First Nations communities there may be no services accessible. Other times, lack of choice can mean the available options do not meet the needs of all users. Both issues contribute to low service usage across aged care and disability services in remote areas, and as well as for First Nations peoples and a number of other marginalised groups. Increasing the accessibility of locally tailored and culturally safe care and support services for First Nations peoples requires supporting the growth of First Nations community-controlled organisations. These organisations are well-positioned to provide services grounded in First Nations perspectives and values."*¹³

It is important to acknowledge that in rural and remote areas and for First Nations communities there may be no accessible services. ACCPA agrees that supporting the growth of First Nations community-controlled organisations is a high priority, which aligns with findings from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (specifically

¹² Department of Home Affairs, [A Migration System for a More Prosperous and Secure Australia: Outline of the Government's Migration Strategy](#), April 2023.

¹³ [Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy](#), p.16.

Recommendation 50: Prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations as aged care providers).¹⁴

Alongside this, consideration should also be given to embedding culturally safe care within non-community-controlled organisations. ACCPA notes work on this has been funded through the 2023-24 Federal Budget measure on cultural safety and trauma-aware healing-informed care training for all aged care services.¹⁵

ACCPA is supportive of consideration being given to growing the First Nations care and support workforce, and agrees there needs to be “a sustainable First Nations care and support workforce, especially in regional, rural and remote areas where workforce shortages are more acute”.¹⁶ Work in this area should be done in consultation with First Nations communities.

Further, the Strategy states that “Care and support services for First Nations peoples should be delivered through community-controlled organisations that are based in communities wherever possible”. ACCPA agrees that this is important, and highlights that consideration should also be given to cultural safety of care delivery in services that are not delivered through community-controlled organisations.¹⁷

Recommendation 6: That acknowledgement of the need to ensure cultural safety of care delivery services for First Nations people is also supported through non community-controlled organisations in the final National Strategy.

2.4 Support for informal carers

ACCPA concurs with the identification of the need for supports for informal carers as part of the Draft National Strategy, including ‘that formal care and support systems be designed to effectively support informal carers.’¹⁸

Other components recognised in the Draft National Strategy include the issue of navigating care and support systems and ‘making it easier for people to navigate these systems quickly and easily will improve access to quality care and support.’¹⁹

ACCPA members, particularly those in regional, First Nations or cultural and linguistically diverse services, report significant supports provided to consumers and their carers to navigate the aged care system are largely unfunded.

Further, the role of respite in aged care will become increasingly in demand as people increasingly age at home and informal care is expected to become more prominent in the Australian community.

Efforts that simplify access and understanding of the care and support economy system, and programs that are sufficiently flexible to provide the range of supports needed by informal carers would be welcomed by the aged care sector.

Recommendation 7: That in addition to existing initiatives to support informal carers and improve system navigation and access, well-designed, nuanced and flexible respite programs be developed throughout the care and support economy sector, including aged care.

¹⁴ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, [List of Recommendations](#), p.242

¹⁵ Department of Health and Aged Care, [Federal Budget 2023 – Aged Care Reforms – Equitable access](#)

¹⁶ Ibid., p.20.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ [Draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy](#), p.26.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.23.

3. Goal 2: Decent jobs

ACCPA supports the policy goal for ‘secure, safe jobs with decent wages, conditions and opportunities for career development’ as well as the following objectives:

1. Pay and conditions reflect the value of care and support work
2. Work is organised and jobs are designed in a way that promotes good job quality and worker satisfaction
3. Jobs are professionalised and there are pathways for skilling and career progression
4. Workplaces are safe and healthy, and psychological and physical risks are eliminated or, if this is not possible, minimised
5. Improved leadership and management capability across the care and support economy
6. Workplaces are inclusive of diverse cultures, genders, ages and abilities and are culturally safe for all workers, including First Nations workers

However, we believe the description ‘Decent jobs’ is not as reflective of the care and support economy workforce opportunities as it could be. We recommend consideration be given to reframing it as a career opportunity, rather than from the premise of an adverse perspective. While decent wages are certainly needed, and more can always be done to improve workplaces and career paths to create ‘decent jobs’, the experience of ACCPA members of their workforce is one of compassion and dedication to a human service – which we believe could be better recognised in the nomenclature of the Draft National Strategy.

3.1 Feedback on Objectives from ACCPA members

In a recent survey of ACCPA members on the future sustainability of aged care, a question about the workforce objectives of Goal 2 was posed:

To what extent are the following workforce objectives fundamental to your organisation’s ability to deliver high quality care?










To what extent are the following workforce objectives fundamental to your organisations ability to deliver high quality care		Not at all to a very great extent		Most Common Response
Pay and conditions reflect the value of care and support work	To a Very Great Extent		Not at All	To a very great extent
Work is organised and jobs are designed in a way that promotes good job quality and worker satisfaction	To a Very Great Extent		Not at All	To a great extent
Workplaces are safe and healthy, and psychological and physical risks are eliminated or, if this is not possible, minimised	To a Very Great Extent		Not at All	To a great extent
Improved leadership and management capability across the care and support economy	To a Very Great Extent		Not at All	To a very great extent
Jobs are professionalised and there are pathways for skilling and career progression	To a Very Great Extent		Not at All	To a great extent
The importance of secure work	To a Very Great Extent		Not at All	To a great extent & To a very great extent
Workplaces are inclusive of diverse cultures, genders, ages and abilities and are culturally safe for all workers, including First Nations workers	To a Very Great Extent		Not at All	To a very great extent

Diagram Legend

-  To a very great extent
-  To a great extent
-  To some extent
-  To very little extent
-  Not at all

As can be seen from the graph, ACCPA notes that all workforce Objectives received positive support as being fundamental to achieving high quality care with two standing out:

- Pay and conditions reflect the value of care and support work; and
- Improved leadership and management capability across the care and support economy

ACCPA welcomed the Australian Government announcement as part of the 2023 Federal Budget to invest \$11.3 billion to fund the Fair Work Commission's decision for a 15 per cent increase to award wages, noting it 'represents a crucial step in building and strengthening our workforce after a very challenging few years.'²⁰

²⁰ Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA), [Media release: Budget delivers for aged care workers – but national conversation on aged care sustainability still required](#), (9 May 2023)

Recommendation 8: That PM&C consider the feedback from ACCPA members when undertaking further policy work on the relative role played by each of the objectives identified in the Draft National Strategy. This consideration should note the strong support of the importance of pay and conditions as well as the possibility of new funding programs to support leadership across the care and support economy.

4. Goal 3: Productive and sustainable

ACCPA supports the policy goal for ‘a care and support economy that has functioning markets, sustainable funding and generates productivity gains’ as well as the following objectives:

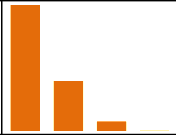
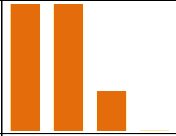
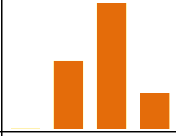
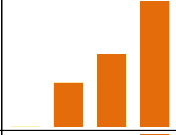

1. Government investment and expenditure in the care and support economy is effective and sustainable, with fair and reasonable consumer contributions where appropriate
2. Regulation is simplified and made more efficient to comply with, without compromising quality and safeguards
3. Funding models support market sustainability, job quality for workers, and quality care and support, including consumer choice and control
4. Innovation is shared, adopted and adapted across the care and support sectors
5. Opportunities in data and digital are harnessed to enable quality care and support, decent jobs and productivity growth

We note that it is a critical time for aged care policy development, including future sustainability – which relates to both the Aged Care Taskforce and the Draft National Strategy. These initiatives will need to be aligned before finalisation.

4.1 Feedback on Objectives from ACCPA members

In a recent survey of ACCPA members on the future sustainability of aged care, a question about the policy goal for ‘Productive and Sustainable’ was posed:

What system supports would you need as a provider to contribute to the policy goal of ‘a care and support economy that has functioning markets, sustainable funding and generates productivity gains’ identified above? (Rank in order of importance)

System Supports to contribute to a care and support economy	1	1 to 5	5	Most Common Ranking
Government investment and expenditure in the care and support economy is effective and sustainable, with fair and reasonable consumer contributions where appropriate	Most Important		Least Important	1
Regulation is simplified and made more efficient to comply with, without compromising quality and safeguards	Most Important		Least Important	1 & 2
Innovation is shared, adopted and adapted across the care and support sectors	Most Important		Least Important	3 & 4
Opportunities in data and digital are harnessed to enable quality care and support, decent jobs and productivity growth	Most Important		Least Important	5
Strong, responsive market stewardship	Most Important		Least Important	5

As can be seen from the survey results above, ACCPA notes that two Objectives for a productive and sustainable care and support sector were identified as top priorities:

- Government investment and expenditure in the care and support economy is effective and sustainable, with fair and reasonable consumer contributions where appropriate; and
- Regulation is simplified and made more efficient to comply with, without compromising quality and safeguards.

On 1 June 2023, ACCPA hosted a historic Financial Sustainability Summit at Old Parliament House, which brought together experts from aged care providers, unions, consumer groups, interest groups, academics and public policy specialists to consider the optimal care funding model for the next 20-30 years. The Summit considered questions such as:

- What role can taxation, levies, and social insurance play in the long-term financial sustainability of the aged care system to deliver quality care?
- What are the benefits and outcomes, risks and barriers to each policy option?
- What role can changes to consumer contributions, including means testing, pre-funded financial products, and pay as you go, play in ensuring an equitable and sustainable aged care system?
- If adopted, what principles should underpin consumer co-contributions?²¹

Summit participants agreed in-principle that co-contributions need to be part of the solution to aged care sustainability, provided it supports increased quality and adds value. However, what that looks like, including care versus daily services and accommodation, requires further conversation and exploration.

A White Paper arising from the Summit is under development and will be provided to PM&C for consideration as part of the care and support economy policy work.

ACCPA also considers that it is important to look at opportunities to find more balanced, nuanced and sophisticated approaches to regulation in the care and support economy. As a human service, consumers need confidence in the service quality and safeguards. However, there are many ways of designing regulation systems that do not create inefficiencies or detract from care models.

Recommendation 9: That PM&C consider the feedback from ACCPA members when undertaking further policy work on the relative role played by each of the objectives identified in the Draft National Strategy for a productive and sustainable care and support economy. This should include a particular focus on the role of consumer co-contributions and an improved regulatory environment.

4.2 A national conversation about long-term sustainability

ACCPA strongly supports the Draft National Strategy signposting the need for a national conversation 'about the expectations on government-funded service provision and the relative contribution between governments and individuals'.

ACCPA will actively participate in the Aged Care Taskforce over coming months, which will include deliberation on similar issues and questions within the context of the aged care sector.

²¹ Aged and Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA), [Media release: Australia's aged care leaders meet today in historic reform Summit](#), (1 June 2023)

ACCPA welcomes the opportunity to engage further with the National Care and Support Economy Taskforce as the Strategy is finalised and a future program of work is embarked upon.

4.3 Contact

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss, please contact us at policy@accpa.asn.au (attn: Anne Liddell, Head of Policy).