



COMMUNIQUÉ

10 FEBRUARY 2022 COUNCIL MEETING

Please accept our sincere thanks

All directors of the Council send their heartfelt thanks to those aged care workers, who, under the most trying circumstances, have continued to serve our most frail and vulnerable. We recognise the grief and suffering experienced by many in the sector over recent months. As we have seen, without the aged care workforce there is no aged care sector. Your efforts have saved lives.

The Council also acknowledges those in the aged care sector who are responding to the current situation and developing solutions. There are many examples from around Australia of proactive, creative approaches that have enabled continuity of excellent care. Despite the challenges, we know that many of you are doing brilliant work, and we celebrate your resilience and resourcefulness.

The Council continues to work closely with the Department of Health and the sector to drive positive change. We value the relationships we have developed, and we want to give a special thanks to everyone who has volunteered their time to assist with and provide feedback on the work of the Council. Your input is invaluable.

Interactive Workforce Planning Tool

Work is progressing well on development of the online workforce planning tool, which is an outcome of Strategic Action 6 from 'A Matter of Care'.

The tool will help to lay a foundation for aged care providers to better understand workforce planning, start the practice of workforce planning in their organisation, and sustain it over the long term.

To ensure that the tool is built to meet the needs of the sector, it is being co-designed with industry stakeholders, by experts in design and technology from [Portable](#).

Some of the questions we have explored so far include;

- How might we encourage aged care organisations to understand how to start workforce planning, sustain the practice and gradually shift focus from 'reacting to change' to 'proactively planning for change'?
- Organisations spend a lot of time and effort pivoting to respond to compliance changes. How might we develop a tool that is flexible enough to respond to changes in compliance, while also nuanced to the realities of working in aged care, so that it provides immediate value to aged care workforce activity planners?

The tool will be designed to suit the realities of working in aged care. The tool will;

- be easy to use, accessible and will move at a pace that will be practical and useful even in a busy and interrupted schedule.
- provide resources and information so that users know how to action the insights they gain from using the tool.
- be tailored to a range of business contexts and will be relevant across multiple models of care so that it caters for the diversity of aged care service providers.
- assist the user to understand their current workforce and any existing gaps before helping them to think about their future workforce needs.

The tool will be available through the Council's website later this year.

Consensus statement to the Fair Work Commission

In a significant development for the aged care sector, a broad coalition of unions, consumer representatives and provider peak bodies submitted a [consensus statement](#) to the Fair Work Commission in support of the aged care industry work value case in December. Neither the Council nor the Australian Government are party to the statement.

Rather, the Council played a neutral role, providing a facilitator to allow the sector to develop their agreed position. This aligns with Recommendation 76 in the final report of the Royal Commission.

The issue of increased wages for aged care workers is now in the hands of the Fair Work Commission. It is anticipated that their findings will be released later this year.

Aged Care Centre for Growth and Translational Research

In another positive step for the sector, the Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Services, Senator Richard Colbeck recently announced that the Aged Care Centre for Growth and Translational Research will soon open at [Flinders University](#) in Adelaide.

The Council and a working group of its Board of Directors, led by Prof John McCallum, have worked closely with the Department of Health over the last couple of years to inform and enhance the design of the centre.

The announcement of the centre is a significant achievement in response to the aged care workforce strategy 'A Matter of Care'. The translational research centre has a key role in driving improvement in aged care service delivery and workforce capability.

The Council is delighted to see that Flinders University will host the Translational Research Centre and we look forward to working with them to support the development of evidence based practical tools and resources from targeted aged care research.

Designing the future structure of the aged care workforce

Work has started with [BDO Australia](#) to design the future structure of the aged care workforce, an outcome of Strategic Action 4 from 'A Matter of Care'.

The intention of this project is to design a workforce structure - that is, the job roles and job families that will be required across the workforce to deliver models of care which holistically address the physical, social and emotional needs of older people. The project will examine potential job pathways and career options, to lay out a plan for meaningful jobs with a long-term future that will allow workers and volunteers to continue to grow and develop their skills within the sector.

This project is in its early stages, and we welcome those of you who may like to be involved in this important work. Please register your interest by email to participate@acwic.com.au.

National Aged Care Advisory Council & Council of Elders

The Council welcomes the recent establishment of both the [National Aged Care Advisory Council](#) and the [Aged Care Council of Elders](#) by the Australian Government. The Council of Elders is chaired by Ian Yates, while the National Aged Care Advisory Council is chaired by Andrea Coote.

We congratulate the members of the two Councils on their appointments and look forward to their contributions as we work to achieve the positive outcomes that older Australians and their families deserve.

Next meeting

The Council's next Board meeting will take place on Thursday 3 March 2022.

Aged Care Sector News

Learn more about skilled visas in aged care – webinar

The Department of Home Affairs and Department of Health are offering a free webinar for aged care providers to learn more about skilled visa options. Topics will include:

- visa options and practical hints for service providers interested in sponsoring workers to fill gaps where Australian workers are not available
- using labour agreements as a flexible alternative approach to accessing skilled overseas workers, where standard skilled visa programs are not accessible
- other aged care workforce initiatives to assist service providers

Service providers from Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane are encouraged to attend the metropolitan provider session on **28 February 2022**. [Register for the metropolitan session here](#).

Providers from the regions or other capital cities are encouraged to attend the session on **3 March 2022** which will cover regional specific visas (in addition to the general skilled visas). [Register for the regional session here.](#)

Attendees can also submit questions in advance of the sessions, by email to BIRO.VIC.TAS@homeaffairs.gov.au.

Aged Care Registered Nurses Payment

The Australian Government is delivering a payment to registered nurses who work for the same aged care employer for 12 months. This payment recognises the integral role of registered nurses in delivering high quality care for our older Australians.

Under the 12-month payment, full-time registered nurses can receive a payment of \$3,700, and part-time and casual registered nurses can receive a payment on a pro rata basis. A six-month payment is also available.

Approved aged care providers may choose to incorporate this payment into their staff attraction and retention strategies. Providers will be responsible for applying for this payment on behalf of their eligible workforce.

More information is available on the [Department of Health website](#).