



# The Aged Care Voluntary Industry Code Of Practice

## Belief Statement

*Celebrating the journey of ageing is an investment in future generations and is the fabric of our society.*

## Guiding Principles

Underpinning this belief statement, are the following guiding principles:

1. Consumer-led and community shared value
2. Living well and integrated models of care
3. Board governance
4. Best practice sharing and industry benchmarking
5. Education and training, including workforce accreditation
6. Workforce planning
7. Proactive assurance and continuous improvement

### Principle 1: Consumer-led and community shared value

Consumers must be at the heart of care decisions and outcomes. The shift towards a more consumer-centric market in aged care is consistent with changing consumer dynamics across the broader economy.

This principle includes consideration of the evolving and increasing expectations of the consumer, who is living longer and demands quality of life. Aligned closely to the principle of living well, engagement with the community must reflect the evolving and increasing expectations of the consumer - particularly to age well 'in place'.

From a workforce perspective, this ensures consumer outcomes are nationally consistent with and proportionate to the risk(s) being managed.

### Principle 2: Living well and integrated models of care

Ageing well, with dignity and independence, is something that everyone deserves.

It will be imperative to focus on each consumer's quality of life and on living well instead of the current compliance-based posture, which is focused on minimum standards of care.

Living well is more than just clinical care (which must continue to be delivered). It also includes the consumer's physical, emotional, cultural (environment and identity) and spiritual aspects. All of these are equally important and need to be captured in holistic care plans. It is founded by trust and respect between the consumer and those supporting them with care and requires the creation of a cohesive environment that supports individuals to optimise their choices to improve quality of life.

Living well is underpinned by integrated care, which requires the provision of care needs be aligned to the consumer's journey along the ageing continuum.

Integrated care refers to the care provided across the aged care, primary and acute health systems, by considering the consumer's needs in a holistic manner. Moreover, it clearly distinguishes safety and clinical needs from functional needs and quality of life considerations.

### **Principle 3: Board governance**

Effective corporate governance by all organisations needs to be taken seriously, recognising that good governance increases business value.

Good board governance cannot be legislated, but it can be built over time by creating a climate of trust and candour; following a culture of critical thinking and working outside the norm; ensuring individual accountability; and regularly evaluating the board's performance.

This includes the creation of appropriate subcommittees of boards or managing bodies to address integrated care compliance, consumer and community expectations and commitments to serious major incident and missed care reporting.

### **Principle 4: Best-practice sharing and industry benchmarking**

This principle recognises the need to draw upon innovative approaches and best-of-breed solutions that exist within the aged care industry—or, indeed, within others—and apply them in a way that supports the betterment of the industry as a whole.

This principle recognises the need to share lessons learnt and better practices and, in particular, the role of higher-performing organisations to support innovation across the industry to ensure that economies of scale are not an impediment to overall industry advancement.

Aligned with best-practice sharing, it is also important to benchmark the industry to other sectors and high-performing organisations around the world, and to be more receptive to looking at other industries for better-practice thinking and innovative ways of operating.

This would also involve adopting an approach to industry benchmarking that focuses on the consumer experience in order to inform workforce planning and proactive community engagement.

### **Principle 5: Education and training, including workforce accreditation**

Education and training is an area warranting attention. There is a pressing need for more active partnerships with the education sector, particularly with universities and vocational education and training organisations across the country. The competencies and skills of the existing workforce must be boosted, with a focus on practical skills and known competency gaps. People working in the industry should be able to see themselves as valued aged care professionals and the full range of their skills recognised.

Workforce accreditation (using a unique employee identifier) would allow employers to view each existing and potential employee's skills and qualifications online (supported through the vocational education and training sector).

### **Principle 6: Workforce planning**

The industry needs to commit to standards to approach workforce planning and skills mix modelling, applicable to both home care and residential settings based on holistic care plans.

This modelling would be part of a provider's business model. It would be used to define improved workforce allocation to deliver care outcomes.

### **Principle 7: Proactive assurance and continuous improvement**

Proactive assurance requires an organisation to determine whether it is operating efficiently and effectively and meeting its stated overall business outcomes. Put simply, it is about defining 'what must go right' and then understanding the risks to achieving these outcomes (or 'what can go wrong').

High-performing organisations use assurance mechanisms (for example, management controls, audit and compliance) to help drive organisational improvement and support sustainable cultural change.

Assurance mechanisms (applying the three lines of defence (3LOD) model) can be linked with transparent feedback cultures to proactively drive continuous improvement across the industry.

.....  
To ensure that these seven guiding principles are embedded into the culture of aged care, organisations signing up to the Voluntary Code will also be asked to adopt the seven leadership pledges (provided separately).