



Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

corporate plan

2019 – 2020



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Message from the Commissioner

I am pleased to present the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's 2019-2020 Corporate Plan.

Since the commencement of the Commission on 1 January 2019, our focus has been on establishing our operations and consolidating the regulatory functions from the former Australian Aged Care Quality Agency and the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.

Our 2019-2020 Corporate Plan builds on our initial achievements and supports the full operation of our powers and functions during an important period of reform in the history of aged care in Australia.

Our operating environment continues to be under the spotlight of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. The Royal Commission is determining the full extent of issues in aged care and understanding how all stakeholders can work together to address both the challenges and opportunities of delivering valued aged care services now and into the future.

This is a critical period for the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission as we implement reforms to strengthen the quality and safety of aged care services and improve consumer experiences and outcomes through the introduction of the new Aged Care Quality Standards and the Charter of Aged Care Rights. The transfer of compliance functions to the Commission from the Department of Health, alongside other reforms, will achieve streamlined end-to-end regulation of Government-funded aged care services, which will benefit both consumers and providers.



Our 2019-2020 Corporate Plan supports the Government's expectation that we protect and enhance the health, safety, well-being and quality of life of aged care consumers, engender confidence and trust in aged care services, and promote provider engagement with consumers in the planning and delivery of their care.

Our Corporate Plan is informed by the advice of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Advisory Council in relation to strategic priorities and by the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians.

J. M. Anderson

Janet Anderson PSM
Commissioner
August 2019

Introduction

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission operates independently and objectively in performing its functions and exercising its powers as set out in the *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act 2018 (ACQSC Act)* and the *Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Rules 2018 (the Rules)*.

The Commission is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act)*.

Our 2019-2020 Corporate Plan addresses the requirements under the PGPA Act and the ACQSC Act.

Our Corporate Plan is part of our annual performance cycle, ending with our annual report and annual performance statement.

The Commission's performance measures cascade through our corporate, operational, business, team and individual performance plans.



Who we are

Our purpose

To protect and enhance the safety, health, well-being and quality of life of aged care consumers.

Our vision

Older Australians trust and have confidence that aged care services protect and enhance their safety, health, well-being and quality of life.

Our role

To independently accredit, assess and monitor aged care services that are subsidised by the Australian Government. The Commission also seeks to resolve complaints about these services, provides education and information about our functions and engages with consumers to develop and promote best practice models of care.

Our values

We undertake our work consistent with the Australian Public Service (APS) values, outlined in the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Impartial

We are apolitical and provide the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.

Committed to service

We are professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and work collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.

Accountable

We are open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.

Respectful

We respect all people, including their rights and their heritage.

Ethical

We demonstrate leadership, are trustworthy, and act with integrity, in all that we do.

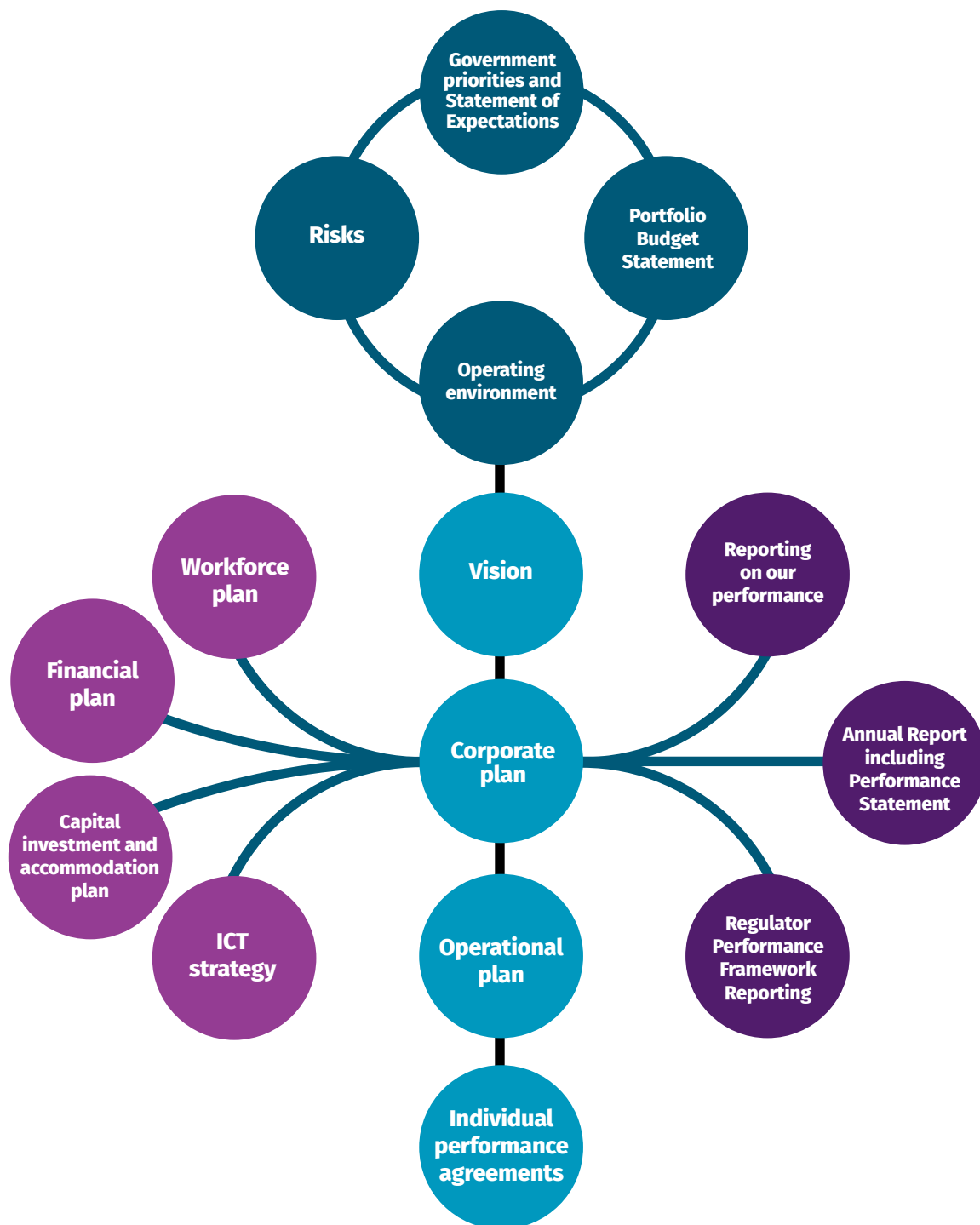
Our functions

Our functions are set out in the ACQSC Act and drive our strategic priorities under this Corporate Plan.

Our functions are:

- 1.** To protect and enhance the safety, health, well-being and quality of life of aged care consumers
- 2.** To promote the provision of quality care and services by:
 - i) approved providers of aged care services; and
 - ii) service providers of Commonwealth-funded aged care services
- 3.** To develop, in consultation with aged care consumers and their representatives, best practice models for the engagement of providers with their aged care consumers and to promote those models to providers.
- 4.** To deal with complaints made, or information given to the Commissioner in accordance with the Rules about an approved provider's responsibilities under the *Aged Care Act 1997* or funding agreement.
- 5.** To regulate aged care services according to the Rules by accrediting, conducting quality reviews, monitoring the quality of care and services and registering quality assessors.
- 6.** To provide education and information about matters relating to one or more of the Commissioner's functions to consumers and their representatives, providers of aged care services and the public.

Our planning and reporting model



Our approach

We carry out our functions in a way that supports improved consumer outcomes, more effective complaints resolution, effective risk-based regulation, better engagement with stakeholders and greater accountability and transparency.

This approach includes:

- supporting the Government's broader policy framework including its consumer-centred and quality improvement aged care agenda
- giving a high priority to cooperating with and responding to requests from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
- speaking with one voice and making it easy for people to access our services
- being innovative and open to new ways of working to improve outcomes for aged care consumers
- developing and maintaining productive working relationships with aged care consumers, providers and other key stakeholders
- Investing in our workforce culture and staff capability to achieve our priorities
- being transparent and joined up in the way we work
- being accountable and seeking feedback to improve our practices and performance.

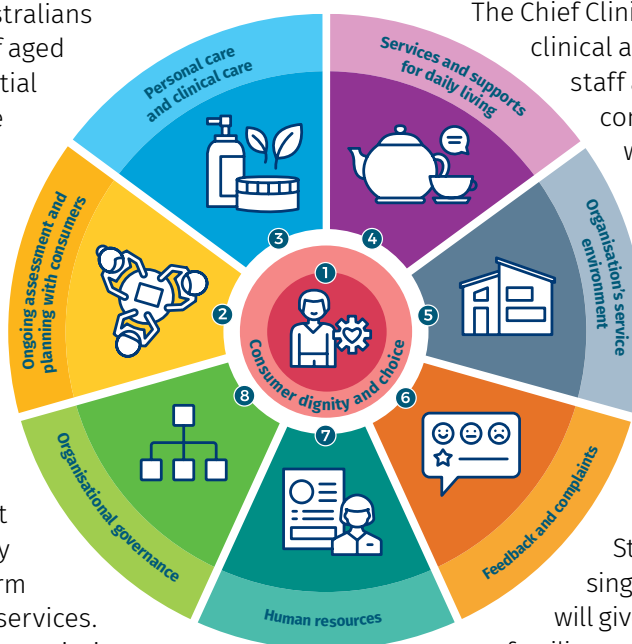
Our operating environment

The Australian population is ageing, with older Australians a growing proportion of the total population.

In 2017, 15% of Australians (3.8 million) were aged 65 and over; this proportion is projected to grow steadily over the coming decades.¹

More than 1.3 million older Australians currently receive some form of aged care service from 2,717 residential aged care services, 2,249 home services and 35 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care services across Australia (as at 31 March 2019).

The Government is undertaking significant reform of the aged care sector to promote the safety, health and well-being of older Australians. The establishment of the Commission on 1 January 2019 represented a major reform to the regulation of aged care services. The proposed transfer to the Commission of aged care regulatory functions currently undertaken by the Department of Health (planned for 2020) will further strengthen and streamline regulatory processes.



The Commission provides a trusted single point of contact in relation to aged care quality and safety for aged care consumers, their families and aged care providers. The Commission provides more joined up regulation, supports better engagement with consumers and providers, and promotes transparency and accountability.

The Chief Clinical Advisor provides expert clinical advice to the Commission's staff and providers. Under our consumer engagement functions, we are working with consumer representative bodies and providers to develop best practice models of consumer engagement in aged care. The Aged Care Quality Standards, introduced on 1 July 2019, promote consumer-centred care and ensure a sharper focus on consumer outcomes. The new Standards together with the new single Charter of Aged Care Rights will give older Australians and their families a greater say in the care they receive, and increased confidence in the quality of their care and services.

Key areas of reform on which the Commission is working collaboratively with the Department of Health to develop are summarised in **Table 1**.

¹ ABS 2017. Australian Demographic Statistics, Jun 2016. ABS cat. no. 3101.0. Canberra: ABS.

Table 1: Key areas of aged care reform

Single Quality Framework

- Implement the Aged Care Quality Standards from 1 July 2019

Single Charter of Aged Care Rights

- Implement a single charter of rights for all aged care consumers from 1 July 2019

Improved regulation

- Transfer compliance functions from the Department of Health to support more joined up regulation from 2020
- Introduce clinical governance guidance to support providers to meet the requirements of the Aged Care Quality Standards
- Support work to improve risk profiling and information sharing from July 2021
- Develop a Serious Incident Response Scheme for implementation from 2021
- Progressively move towards more risk-based assessments

Greater transparency for consumers

- Promulgate an open disclosure framework to support providers to meet the requirements of the Aged Care Quality Standards
- Implement differentiated performance ratings to support the development of 'easy to read', plain-English audit reports from July 2020
- Support the development of a mandatory Quality Indicator Program from July 2019
- Develop and implement a process to name non-responsive or non-compliant providers from 2020

Home Services Quality and Compliance

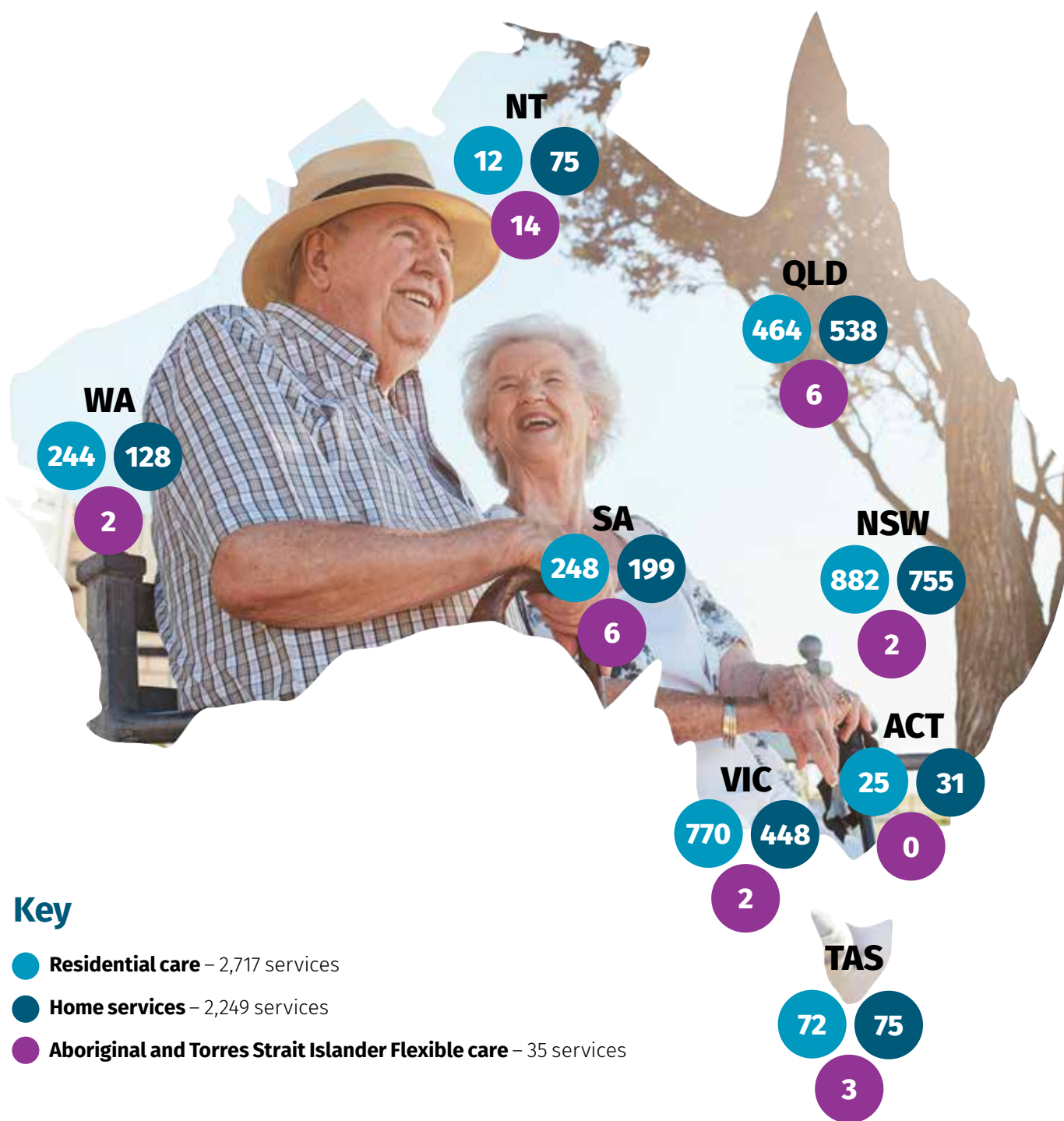
- Introduce consumer experience reporting in home services from 1 July 2019
- Develop an end-to-end compliance response to safeguard the quality, safety and integrity of home services for implementation from 2020

Build a sustainable regulatory system

- Develop a resource model for aged care regulation.

Aged care services at a glance

As at 31 March 2019

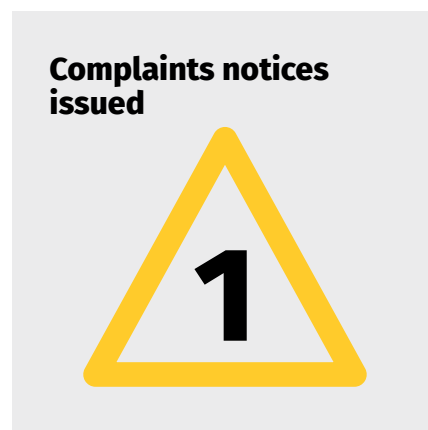
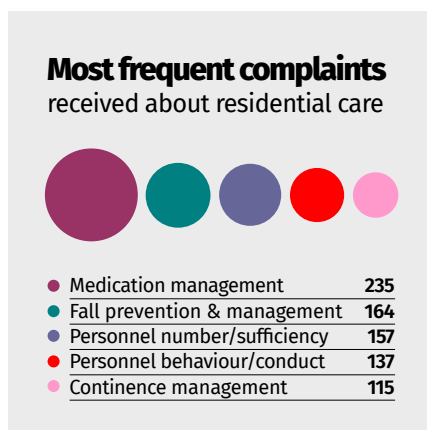
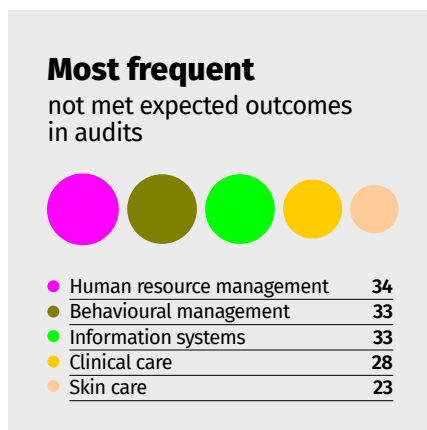
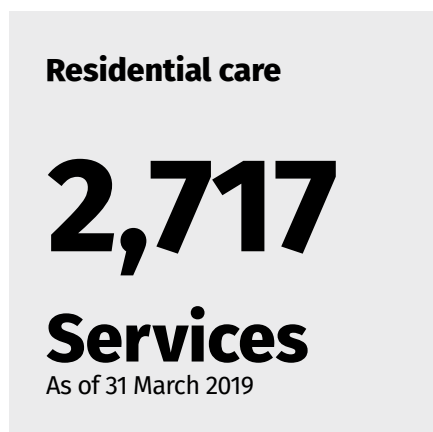


Key

- Residential care – 2,717 services
- Home services – 2,249 services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible care – 35 services

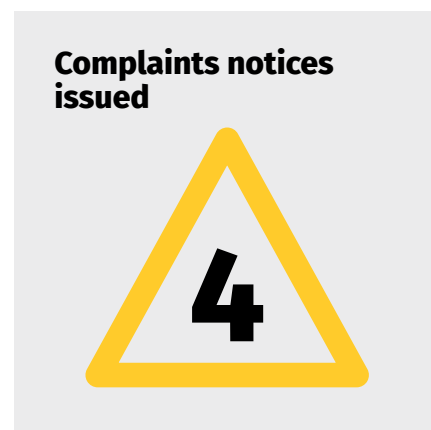
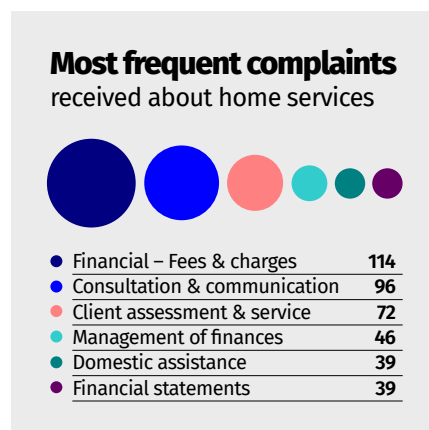
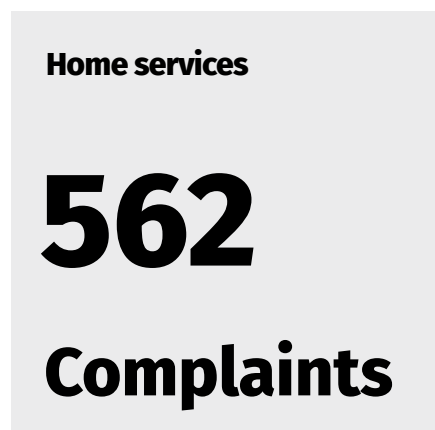
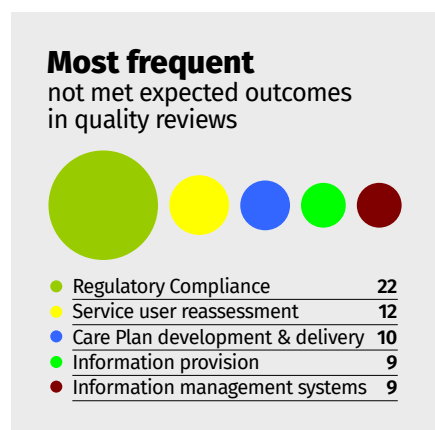
Residential care sector performance

January – March 2019



Home services sector performance

January – March 2019



National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander flexible aged care program sector performance

January – March 2019



Our regulatory approach

The Commission uses the full range of its complementary functions under the ACQSC Act to facilitate a responsive, risk-based regulatory approach.

This enables the Commission to better manage risks and respond appropriately to instances of failure.

- *Risk-based* means the focus of our activities is on the areas of greatest potential harm to safety, health and well-being of aged care consumers.
- *Responsive* means we respond to the context, conduct and culture of the organisations we regulate when we decide what action to take.

Our approach means that we direct our resources in response to risks to the safety, health, well-being and quality of life of aged care consumers. This includes analysing and sharing regulatory information relating to complaints about a service to assist our understanding of the service's relative risk of non-compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards and the behaviour of the service in relation to meeting its broader responsibilities for care and services.

The range of tools we use to support our regulatory approach include:

- education of consumers and providers;
- complaints resolution where the outcome results in an informed, empowered consumer and (where required) improvements in care implemented by the provider;
- publication of sector and individual provider performance data;
- assessment against the Aged Care Quality Standards and escalating requirements to remedy findings of non-compliance with them; and
- penalties for persistent and/or serious non-compliance.

Our regulatory approach seeks to promote an aged care system that empowers consumers, develops safer systems of care, inculcates a culture of safety and quality, and learns from mistakes. A system operating in this way will give the community, and in particular older Australians, greater confidence that the aged care they access will meet their needs and provide the best possible experience and outcomes.

Our regulatory performance

The Commonwealth Regulator Performance Framework sets out the Government's clear expectations of Commonwealth regulators.

We are accountable under this framework for our regulatory functions against six outcome-based key performance indicators comprising:

- reduced regulatory burden
- communications
- risk-based and proportionate approaches
- efficient and coordinated monitoring
- transparency
- continuous improvement.

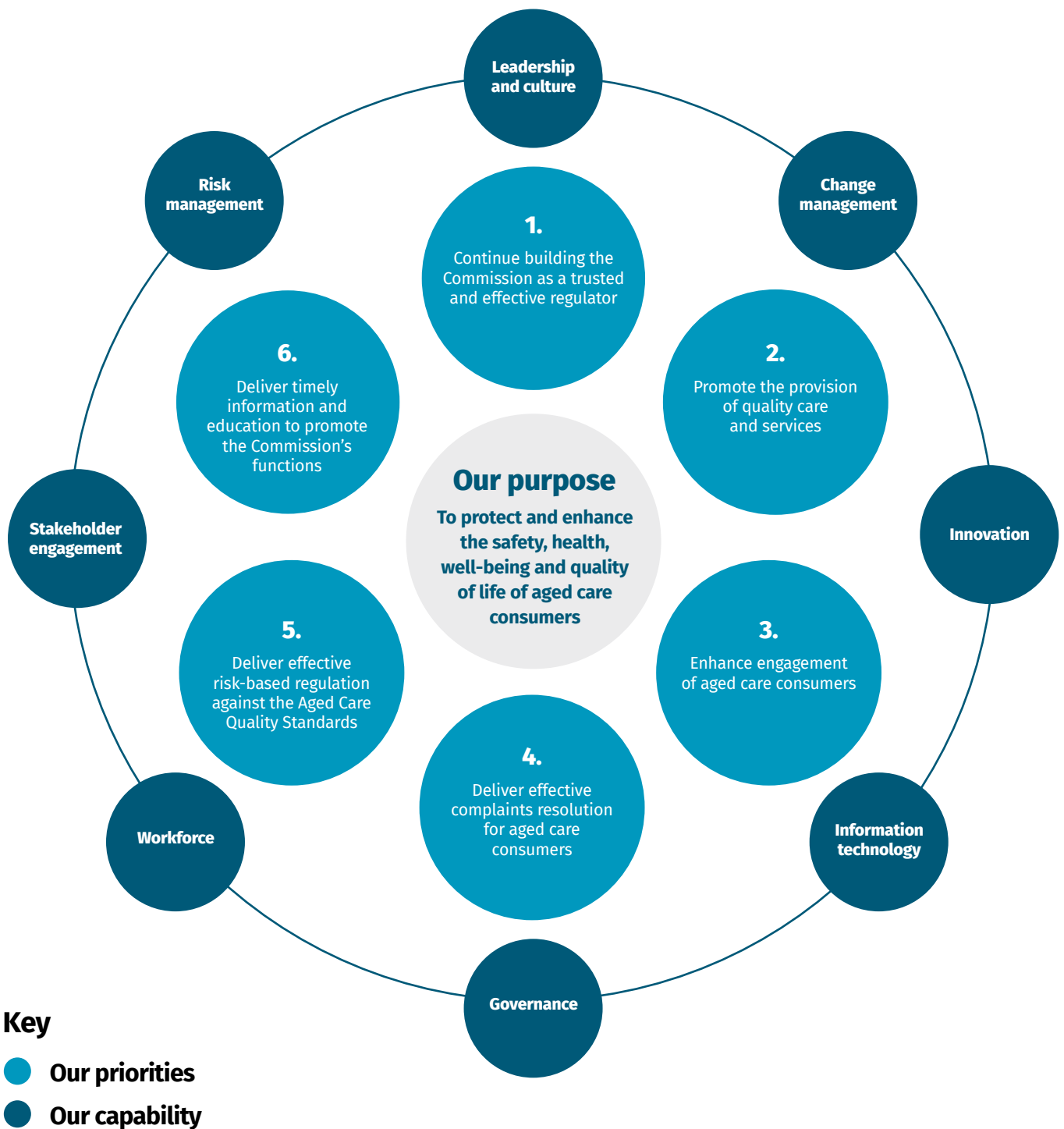
This sets a strategic framework for us to improve our systems, processes and performance in specific areas such as case management, our data on risk and performance, and reviewing our operational practices to achieve greater efficiency and targeted outcomes.

This framework applies to our regulatory performance in both residential and home services and we embed these performance measures into planning for our capabilities and regulatory services.

We regularly seek feedback from the sector and use this feedback to inform continuous improvements to our approach and to adapt to changes in our external environment.



Our plan at a glance



Our priorities

1. Continue building the Commission as a trusted and effective regulator



Our priorities

1. Continue building the Commission as a trusted and effective regulator

Intended result:

A Commission that is trusted by consumers, providers and the community as a fair and effective regulator of aged care services.

Focus area	Our aim	Performance measure
1.1 Corporate governance	To ensure that the Commissioner and Minister have access to valued, strategic advice	The Aged Care Quality and Safety Advisory Council is supported to provide timely and strategic advice to the Commissioner, and to the Minister on request
	To implement a corporate governance framework to manage risk and support continuous improvement of the Commission's operations	Risk register and quality assurance framework in place and monitored
	To fully operationalise the Chief Clinical Advisor's role and support structures	A model established to support the role of the Chief Clinical Advisor
1.2 Integrated compliance functions	To build an end-to-end, effective regulatory framework	Compliance and other regulatory functions successfully transitioned to the Commission from January 2020

Focus area	Our aim	Performance measure
<p>1.3 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety</p>	<p>To ensure the Commission is supporting and informing the work of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety</p> <p>To be responsive to the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission</p>	<p>100% of requests from the Royal Commission responded to within requested timeframes</p> <p>Work with Government to respond to findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission within established timeframes</p> <p>Proactively communicate changes implemented as part of the Government's response to the Royal Commission's findings and recommendations</p>
<p>1.4 Corporate capability and resources</p>	<p>To ensure the Commission's workforce is capable, skilled and engaged to deliver its functions</p> <p>To implement an improved performance development framework and learning strategy to build staff capability</p> <p>To ensure staff have appropriate IT equipment, access to technology and business system improvements</p> <p>To provide advice to Government on resource requirements and ensure efficient utilisation of resources to meet the Commission's priorities</p> <p>To review and enhance internal communication and engagement strategies</p>	<p>A strategic workforce plan in place to support contemporary recruitment, training and performance management of staff</p> <p>A contemporary performance development framework and learning strategy implemented</p> <p>Devices, technology and business systems continue to meet changing business needs</p> <p>Expenditure is within allocated budget</p> <p>Improved staff engagement and satisfaction with the Commission's internal communication strategies</p>

Our priorities

2. Promote the provision of quality care and services



Our priorities

2. Promote the provision of quality care and services

Intended result:

Increased confidence and trust in the quality and safety of aged care services and commitment from providers to continuous improvement.

Focus area	Our aim	Performance measure
2.1 Risk-based regulation	To develop and apply a regulatory strategy which supports the Commission's risk-based approach	The Commission's Regulatory Strategy published and operationalised and regulatory bulletins published on a regular basis
2.2 Manage risk-based intelligence	To apply risk-based intelligence to the delivery of the Commission's regulatory functions in a timely way To ensure the appropriate referral of information and exchange of risk-based intelligence and data with other key regulatory bodies	Improvements made to processes for internal information sharing The Commission has protocols in place to share risk-based intelligence and data with the Department of Health and relevant regulators
2.3 Regulatory performance	To implement quarterly reporting of complaints and regulatory performance data to provide greater visibility and transparency of sector-wide risks and promote continuous improvement across the sector	Publication of quarterly data reports and provider performance on the Commission's website
2.4 Engagement on aged care quality regulation	To provide leadership on key issues relating to aged care quality and safety through industry and consumer engagement and communication To work with the Department of Health to develop and implement the next phase of aged care reforms	The Commission's engagement and communication activities promote better practice and improved aged care quality and safety Milestones for key policy reforms and budget measures achieved
2.5 Regulatory performance framework	To be accountable for our own regulatory performance	Regulatory performance framework targets assessed and published

Our priorities

3. Enhance engagement of aged care consumers



Our priorities

3. Enhance engagement of aged care consumers

Intended result:

Consumers are engaged in the planning and delivery of their aged care services.

Focus area	Our aim	Performance measure
3.1 Consumer engagement project	To understand the successful application of consumer-centred care and provide initial guidance to the sector and to consumers on best practice consumer engagement and co-design	Promotion of best practice models
3.2 Consumer information	To ensure consumers find it easy to contact the Commission and to have their concerns dealt with appropriately	Improvements made to information intake and handling to improve the consumer experience
	To work with peak consumer bodies to support consumers' awareness of the Aged Care Quality Standards and the single Charter of Aged Care Rights	Information developed and accessible to support consumer awareness of the Aged Care Quality Standards and the Charter of Aged Care Rights
	To ensure that consumers understand their rights and are aware of avenues for assistance in resolving concerns and complaints about aged care services	Promote awareness of the Commission's functions in relation to resolving complaints about aged care providers
3.3 Consumer experience reporting	To implement new consumer experience reporting (CER) questions and methodology in home services from 1 July 2019 to better inform consumers and our regulatory approach	Promote and conduct CER interviews in home services from 1 July 2019 and develop options for publication

Our priorities

4. Deliver effective complaints resolution for aged care consumers



Our priorities

4. Deliver effective complaints resolution for aged care consumers

Intended result:

Consumers trust that making a complaint leads to better outcomes.

Focus area	Our aim	Performance measure
4.1 Management of complaints	To ensure that consumers are confident that a complaint to the Commission will lead to improvements in care	≥85% of people who complete the complaint feedback survey express satisfaction with the Commission's approach, fairness, impartiality and transparency of the process
	To ensure efficient, effective, impartial and fair resolution of complaints	≥80% complaints closed within 60 days and ≥90% within 90 days A plan in place to mitigate risk to performance targets resulting from increase in volume of complaints
	To ensure the resolution of complaints supports the implementation of the Aged Care Quality Standards and the continuous improvement of providers	Complaints processes revised to align with the Aged Care Quality Standards
4.2 Joined up processes	To ensure that the complaints function and regulatory functions are aligned to support the implementation of the Aged Care Quality Standards	Enhanced capability and complaints processes that interact with and support the Aged Care Quality Standards and Charter of Aged Care Rights

Our priorities

5. Deliver effective risk-based regulation against the Aged Care Quality Standards



Our priorities

5. Deliver effective risk-based regulation against the Aged Care Quality Standards

Intended result:

Improved consumer experience through more effective regulation against the Aged Care Quality Standards.

Focus area	Our aim	Performance measure
5.1 Aged Care Quality Standards	To monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Aged Care Quality Standards and ensure a proportionate approach to regulation	Data on trends in compliance, serious risk and regulatory responses monitored
5.2 Regulatory program	To deliver a program of regulatory work that ensures adequate and appropriate oversight of risk and that supports continuous improvement	A program of regulatory activity in place that meets statutory requirements and that supports continuous improvement
	To implement enhanced risk profiling and increased information sharing to inform our risk-based approach	Streamlined triage and collection of information to inform timely, risk-based regulatory monitoring
5.3 Regulatory policies and practices	To implement a new Regulatory Decisions Policy and Assessment Methodology to support sound, consistent decisions and quality assessments under the Aged Care Quality Standards	A framework developed to quality assure the soundness and consistency of assessment outcomes and decisions ≥90% of appeals escalated to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal are found to uphold the Commission's decision
5.4 Improve regulation of home services	To implement end-to-end improvements to strengthen regulation of home services	A program of quality reviews and assessment contacts in place that provides appropriate oversight of risk and promotes continuous improvement in home services Increased use of CERs and intelligence to inform regulation of home services

Our priorities

6. Deliver timely information and education to promote the Commission's functions



Our priorities

6. Deliver timely information and education to promote the Commission's functions

Intended result:

Consumers are empowered, and providers informed, through access to information and education about the Commission's functions.

Focus area	Our aim	Performance measure
6.1 Effective education programs	To enhance the relevance and effectiveness of education programs to support performance consistent with the Aged Care Quality Standards	Best practice models of consumer-centred care promoted through our education programs ≥90% of people who complete our education program feedback survey are satisfied with the Commission's education and engagement activities
	To update existing and develop new education programs to support the Aged Care Quality Standards	New and updated training programs for providers are implemented
	To ensure our compliance assistance is targeted to areas of risk including in home services	A program of targeted compliance assistance in place including for home services
6.2 Sector engagement and communication	To improve sector engagement and communication to support the Commission's functions	A strategy developed and operationalised to support sector engagement and communication of the Commission's functions and priorities
6.3 Enhanced information and communication	To seek feedback from key stakeholders and continue enhancement of information and communication for consumers, providers and the public	Enhanced information and communication for consumers, providers and the public including through our website and social media
	To improve provider access to information on best practice clinical care	Enhanced information and communication to providers on best practice clinical care including clinical governance

Our capability

We continue to build organisational capability to support delivery of our purpose and functions. Key areas of capability improvement include:

Leadership and culture

We continue to support our leadership capability through a distributed leadership approach and enhanced communication and engagement activities.

Stakeholder engagement

We continue to improve our engagement with stakeholders through strengthened partnerships and consultative processes. We are committed to listening and improving our services from the feedback and complaints we receive.

Change management

We are focused on ensuring an effective Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and implementation of aged care reforms through enhanced change management capability.

Innovation

We are committed to exploring new ways of working to achieve efficiencies and more effective processes for regulation of aged care services and management of complaints.

Quality improvement

We are committed to implementing a quality assurance framework to support continuous improvement of the Commission's operations.

Information Technology

We continue to improve our information technology capability through the implementation of our ICT strategic plan and investment in innovative solutions supporting our performance and data analytics capability.

Governance

We continue to enhance our governance through engagement with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Advisory Council.

Workforce

We are investing in our workforce to attract and retain highly skilled and capable staff. A priority is ensuring our front-line staff are equipped with the skills and capability to support the implementation of the new Aged Care Quality Standards.

Risk management

We are working to better understand sector-wide and provider risk through the development of an enhanced risk profiling framework. We continue to enhance our risk management policies to better understand and manage enterprise risks.

Our risk management and oversight

We are committed to effectively identifying and managing risk as required by Section 16E of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.*

We have a clear methodology that identifies potential adverse events, the likelihood of their occurrence, the impact of their occurrence, and mitigation strategies in the event of their occurrence.

Our risk management approach also recognises the positive opportunity of engaging with risk to ensure we maintain our value to consumers and the aged care sector.

Risk is managed across all levels of the Commission through a continued focus on strengthening rigour and consistency in our business processes, effective governance to ensure transparent decision making, and continuous improvement in financial management to ensure efficient use of resources.

The key risks that we are responding to in the current environment include:

- 1.** meeting Government and community expectations of our role and functions
- 2.** acting in a timely manner to implement Government decisions in response to findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
- 3.** pursuing Government aged care reform priorities in parallel with the Royal Commission's work, including the transfer of compliance functions from the Department of Health to the Commission to create an end-to-end regulatory model
- 4.** sufficiency of resources to meet increases in complaints and incidences of failure in the delivery of aged care services
- 5.** providers' understanding of and capability to address the requirements of the Aged Care Quality Standards
- 6.** timeliness and effectiveness of education and information to support successful implementation of the Aged Care Quality Standards
- 7.** sufficiency of flexibility in our regulatory approach to address emerging issues
- 8.** sufficiency of regulatory intelligence and data analytics to effectively monitor risk and performance of aged care services
- 9.** sufficiency of resources and capability to support transformational change.



Phone
1800 951 822



Web
agedcarequality.gov.au



Write
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
GPO Box 9819, In Your Capital City