

# Newsletter - April 2019

Read the latest issue of the *Aged Care Quality Bulletin*, the Commission's monthly newsletter for Australian aged care providers.



## Issue #4, April 2019

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## Commissioner message

I recently wrote to all providers to ensure you are aware of important changes to the aged care regulatory environment from 1 July 2019. [Back to top](#)

The letter addressed provider preparations for the commencement of the new Aged Care Quality Standards, the Commission's approach to assessment against the new Quality Standards, and the Charter of Aged Care Rights.

In my interactions with providers since the Commission began in January 2019, I have noted a high level of general awareness of the new Quality Standards and other aged care reforms.

I strongly encourage every provider to pay close attention to the forthcoming changes in the regulatory settings and to put in place the necessary arrangements to ensure your services comply with the new provisions from 1 July.

I also urge boards or governing bodies of approved providers to ensure that they are aware of their accountability for governance of the delivery of safe, quality care and services.

Further information about the key changes is available from the Commission's website at [agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au).

**Ms Janet Anderson PSM**  
**Commissioner**

## Commission appoints Chief Clinical Advisor



The Commission has appointed Dr Melanie Wroth as its Chief Clinical Advisor.

Commissioner Janet Anderson said Dr Wroth, who has an extensive background in geriatric medicine, will provide expert clinical advice to the Commission and also encourage and assist aged care providers to access best practice guidance on clinical care for aged care recipients.

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“This appointment comes at an important time, as the aged care sector and the Commission move towards the introduction of new Standards and regulations on 1 July,” she said.

“Among Dr Wroth’s priorities will be to engage with a range of stakeholders in the aged care sector, including peak bodies representing consumers, health professionals and aged care service providers respectively - to raise awareness of clinical issues in aged care and to promote better practice.”

Dr Wroth will take up her position on 10 May.

## Implications of Federal Budget for the Commission

The Federal Budget on 2 April allocated nearly \$6.5 million in extra funding to the Commission from 2019-20. This includes:

- \$2.3m to develop and implement an end-to-end compliance scheme in home care. This is to further safeguard the quality, safety and integrity of home care services as the Home Care Packages Program expands,
- \$2.4m to enhance risk profiling and increase compliance monitoring in home care. This is the first phase of a home care compliance framework to improve the Commission’s ability to quickly identify and respond to risk, and
- \$1.8m to establish a clinical pharmacist unit within the Commission. This is to deliver improved clinical outcomes for consumers by promoting coordinated and effective use of existing ‘quality use of medicines’ initiatives, evidence-based guidance material and encouraging collaboration between medical and other health practitioners.

Other aged care reforms announced in the Budget that are relevant to the Commission include the:

- Introduction of a Serious Incident Response Scheme for aged care providers to report assaults and serious incidents in their facilities,
- Expansion of the Quality Indicator Program to include two additional indicators - falls and fractures, and medication management,
- Development of a Risk Based Targeting and Information Sharing System, an IT initiative that will identify aged care providers that pose a risk to consumers, and
- Expansion of Home Care Packages.

**More information about the aged care Budget is [here](#).**

## Two-hour meeting ends two years of concerns

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A Commission-convened conciliation meeting between the concerned daughter of an 85-year-old woman living with dementia and her aged care provider has produced valued solutions.

The daughter said the meeting “resolved in two hours what I have been trying to achieve for two years.”

Her mother requires assistance with most daily activities.

The meeting in Queensland resolved nine longstanding issues relating to health and personal care, food quality and assistance with eating, and choice and dignity.

Participants in the conciliation included the complainant, an aged and disability advocate, the service manager and the clinical manager. It was facilitated by two Commission complaints officers.

Solutions to the concerns included:


- The complainant will meet with the diversional therapist to discuss activities that could be offered to residents in the area. For example, this would involve residents in daily housekeeping activities they enjoy, such as folding laundry and setting and clearing tables,
- Bibs would no longer be used on any residents. Instead, the service would supply serviettes, and
- The service manager will arrange a portable phone for the wing which can be used by all residents. The service will contact the complainant at agreed times each week to provide an update on her mother and then give the phone to her mother to speak with her.

The provider was particularly pleased with the outcomes, which they felt would also benefit other people residing at the service.

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Conciliation processes such as this can be effective in giving consumers a central role in deciding how their complaints can be resolved. They can also provide an opportunity for the service to participate in developing mutually agreed outcomes for complaint issues.

## Stronger aged care protections for senior Australians

 image of doctor comforting patient.

A new report detailing options for a Serious Incident Response Scheme for aged care, including findings that a broader range of incidents should be reported, has been released.

The report, prepared by KPMG, was delivered after consultations with more than 130 aged care sector stakeholders, and with representatives from consumer advocate groups, approved providers and the aged care workforce.

The report canvasses options of what should be considered a reportable incident including: physical, sexual or financial abuse; seriously inappropriate, improper, inhumane or cruel treatment; and neglect.

The report also found the current exemptions for reporting resident-on-resident assaults may not be effective in ensuring an abuse-free environment for aged care recipients.

It recommends the new scheme is overseen by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.

The report was prepared in response to a recommendation in the Carnell-Paterson Review of National Aged Care Quality Regulatory Processes (2017) that a Serious Incident Response Scheme should be implemented.

In its 2017-18 Budget, the Federal Government committed to developing options for such a scheme and engaged KPMG.

**The full report is at the Department of Health's website.**

## Preparing for the new Standards

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The Commission's education series, 'Preparing for the new Standards', has already involved more than 900 participants at one-day events in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Campbell Town (Tasmania), Perth and Sydney.

Slightly longer (1.5-day) events have been scheduled for Alice Springs (27-28 May) and Darwin (29-30 May) which are specifically targeting rural and remote aged care services. Invitations have been sent to relevant providers with information about how to register.

If you are a rural or remote aged care service and did not receive an invitation, please contact the Education and Engagement team via: [education@agedcarequality.gov.au](mailto:education@agedcarequality.gov.au).

Due to high demand, the Commission is also delivering standalone workshops, with 60 scheduled across the country.

Depending on demand, more may be organised, particularly in regional and remote areas. Irrespective of course attendance, aged care services are encouraged to deliver an internal training program for their staff.

The 'Getting to know the Standards for aged care staff' resource is designed to assist services to engage with the new Standards and to have conversations about what they mean in practice. Services are also encouraged to undertake a self-assessment of how they are performing against the new Standards.

**Further resources are available for download under the [Resource section](#) of the Commission website.**

## New video to support consumers' understanding of new Standards

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## What the new Aged Care Quality Standards mean for you (consumer video)



A video has just been released by the Commission that talks directly to aged care consumers about changes that will affect them from 1 July.

It provides information to consumers about the new Standards and the Aged Care Charter of Rights that come into effect from 1 July.

The video, 'What the new Aged Care Quality Standards mean for you', provides examples of what the Standards mean in practice and where consumers can get more details.

It also references the Charter of Aged Care Rights and directs consumers and their representatives to where they can obtain further information and support.

Providers are encouraged to use the video as a tool to help aged care recipients and their families, carers and representatives to understand the new Quality Standards and what the changes will mean for them.

**The video can be accessed at the [Commission's website](#). It complements the new standards video, produced to assist care providers (see story below), which is also [available online](#).**

## New Standards video for providers now online

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An education video for service providers that focuses on the new Aged Care Quality Standards is now online.

Launched on 24 April, it is available from both the Commission and Altura Learning websites. The two organisations collaborated in making the program.

The 30-minute video explores each of the eight new aged care Quality Standards and provides practical advice on how they apply in residential and home care services.

Commissioner Janet Anderson PSM said: “The Aged Care Quality Standards video will be another valuable resource for aged care services as they prepare for the new Aged Care Quality Standards.

“Providers are strongly encouraged to access this relevant and informative learning resource and use it to support staff to understand and apply the new Aged Care Quality Standards,” she said.

CEO of Altura Learning, Yvie Webley said: “We are expecting to see high viewing numbers for this program. This is a pivotal time to be providing education on the new Standards to our members and the sector as we track toward the implementation of the new consumer focused Aged Care Quality Standards”.

## Seasonal signals for flu vaccinations

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Falling leaves and falling temperatures are the traditional signals of an approaching flu season – and a prompt to think about flu vaccination.

The Department of Health notes that influenza, a highly contagious infection of the airways, is especially serious for people over the age of 65.

The influenza vaccine is free for these individuals through the National Immunisation Program.

Because influenza virus strains change every year, so does the vaccine to combat it. That's why it's important for people to get the vaccine every year.

Consumer information for influenza vaccine, available through the Department's website, notes:

"The influenza virus can spread rapidly, especially in homes or institutions, where it can be very easy for someone to catch flu and spread the disease.

"A doctor will be able to recommend the best time... to be vaccinated.

"Flu is present every year, even when epidemics or outbreaks are not reported."

The department also suggests that the onset of the annual flu season is also a useful time to check that seniors' other vaccinations are up-to-date, saying vaccination for people aged 65 years or over is just as important as it is for children.

Its extensive resource about vaccination includes information about catch up vaccinations and additional vaccines recommended for people over 65.

**It's available on the [Department of Health website](#).**

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**Changed:** Thursday, 2 May 2019 - 9:34am

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