

# Newsletter - February 2019

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



## Issue #2, February 2019

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## Commissioner message

We have now been in operation for two very busy and productive months.

In this February issue, we update you on the recent release of the comprehensive analysis of Consumer Experience Report data from La Trobe University and foreshadow an upcoming release of sector performance data. These initiatives are just two of the steps we are taking to make information more transparent and publicly accessible.

We also provide you with feedback from our first 'Preparing for the Standards' events in Perth and Adelaide. These events have proven to be very popular, and we are currently planning a further program of half-day workshops for those who have missed out on registering.

This edition also touches on how providers can get ready for the new Standards with key action steps to take, including developing a culture that welcomes direct feedback and complaints. The Commission provides a range of Standards guidance material on our website and I encourage providers to familiarise themselves with these resources.

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is now well underway. The Royal Commission has been tasked with exploring how the aged care sector (consumers, providers, funders, regulators) can best meet the challenges and opportunities of delivering quality aged care services now and into the future.

We are fully supporting the important work of the Royal Commission through responding to notices and witness requests. As the national regulator, we are also monitoring proceedings so we can learn from the information being shared and actively consider ways of improving our approach.

I hope you enjoy reading this February edition and find it informative.

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

## Greater transparency on consumer experience in care

The Commission has just released a new report on its website detailing and analysing what consumers are saying about the quality of care in residential aged care services.

La Trobe University's Australian Institute for Primary Care & Ageing conducted the analysis, using data from the Commission's Consumer Experience Reports (CERs), compiled from structured consumer interviews during visits to aged care services from 9 May 2017 to 4 July 2018.

The data was collected from 17,195 consumers living in 1,159 residential aged care services across Australia - covering about 43 per cent of all residential aged care services.

La Trobe University's Professor Yvonne Wells said: "This CER dataset provides us with a deeper understanding of the consumer experience in residential aged care.

"The two CER questions with the lowest levels of positive responses are about food and having staff to talk to when feeling a bit sad or worried.

"With nutrition and mental health being key areas of overall health, these are important findings."

The new 30-page analysis provides important insights on areas including food, lifestyle, staff and management.

The report shows the overall strength of the sector, as well as highlighting areas for improvement.

The Commission is looking to soon expand CERs to include home care services.

### **Read Report**

## New Standards event a sold-out success



The Commission's full-day 'Preparing for the Standards' workshops are now under way – with all events now sold out across Australia.

The first events, held in Perth and Adelaide drew a crowd of 150 attendees each, including approved providers, CEOs, board members, directors of care, health professionals, and education and quality managers.

Viv Daniels National Manager of Complaints Operations, and Ann Wunsch Executive Director Quality Assessment and Monitoring Operations represented the Commission at the Perth event, and discussed the vision and priorities over the coming months.

“The new Standards signal a paradigm shift in aged care, moving the focus to outcomes for individual consumers,” Ms Wunsch said.

“These events are a great opportunity to reflect with consumer advocates and providers on the significance of the new Standards, and the importance of engaging early with consumers about how care can be co-produced and delivered to enhance individual consumer outcomes.”

Among other Standards, Ms Wunsch focused on Standard 7 (3)(b), which highlights that workforce interactions with consumers are kind, caring and respectful of each consumer’s identity, culture and diversity.

The Perth event’s guest panel included Jennette Ward, Director of Strategic Projects and Policy (COTA WA) and Diedre Timms, CEO (Advocare WA representing OPAN). The panel discussed the opportunities and challenges for the aged care sector as we transition to the new Aged Care Quality Standards.

Jennette Ward said: “It was great to be part of this important event and to hear more from providers about the ways we can provide support to them during this transition.”

Attendees found the event a great opportunity to network, and learn and reflect outside of the busy workplace.

## Commission participates in first industry engagements





*Pictured [R-L]: LASA State Manager NSW Brendan Moore, Principal Advisor Residential Aged Care Sharyn McIlwain and Commission Executive Director, Quality Assessment and Monitoring Operations Ann Wunsch at LASA Tri State Conference in Albury, February 2019. Photo: supplied.*

The Commission has officially participated in its first formal engagements with the aged care sector during February.

Janet Anderson, Commissioner, gave a presentation at the National Aged Care Alliance (NACA) event on 15 February in Canberra, and Ann Wunsch, Executive Director Quality Assessment and Monitoring Operations, presented to the Leading Aged Services Australia (LASA) Tri-State Conference which ran from 24-26 February in Albury.

Other speakers at the NACA meeting included the Hon Ken Wyatt MP, Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care, Senator Rachael Siewert, Greens spokesperson for Ageing and Ian Yates, Chief Executive of COTA Australia.

“I enjoyed the opportunity to meet with aged care advocates at the NACA meeting, and to discuss the functions and priorities of the new Commission,” Ms Anderson said.

“At the conference, I touched on two priorities for the Commission – ensuring that the experiences of aged care recipients and their families are central to the work of both the Commission and service providers, and holding providers to account against the Standards for the safety and quality of the care they deliver.”

Two weeks later, Ms Wunsch addressed more than 300 aged care service professionals, leaders and specialists at the two-day LASA Tri-State Conference in Albury, which focused on ‘Creating Innov8tive Quality Care’.

LASA CEO Sean Rooney said there was a keen interest in the Commission's address with the current national focus squarely on quality and safety in the aged care industry.

"We're pleased the Commission chose to join us at the conference at such a critical time, less than two months after commencing operations and with the Royal Commission underway."

## New insights on aged care sector performance

The Commission will soon release the first set of aged care sector performance data – one of many steps being taken to improve transparency in reporting across the aged care sector.

Commissioner Janet Anderson said the new 'Sector Performance' reports will provide more readily accessible information to providers, consumers, and all Australians.

"The initial set of data will be six months from July – December 2018. This will be from the former Quality Agency and Complaints Commissioner and will include statistics on complaints, the number of audits and monitoring visits, and also findings of non-compliance and serious risk," Ms Anderson said.

"Following the initial release of data, we will provide regular sector performance updates from the Commission. These reports will be available on our website for everyone to view.

"Over time, this will help to track trends and issues across services and provide greater transparency on how we assess services."

## Top tips to get your service ready for the Standards



As the aged care sector experiences ongoing reforms, the Commission has a strong commitment to ensuring that providers have access to relevant guidance and information to support their transition to the new Standards. This includes through providing workshops, resources and the latest tools.

The Commission has compiled a list of simple, actionable tips to get your service and staff prepared for Quality Assessment against the new Standards coming into effect from 1 July.

#### **Top tips:**

- 1. Utilise Standards resources:** Display the Standards resources (including Guidance Material, posters, Standards fact sheet and video) around your organisation so they are visible and freely available to your team, consumers and their families. All Standards resources can be found in the [Resource Library](#) on the Commission website.
- 2. Consider the organisation's governance, systems, policies and practices in the context of the new Standards:** The new Standards have an extra focus on outcomes for consumers. Consider this with each of the Standards, and engage directly with consumers to discuss what this means in practice and how this may inform your organisational culture.
- 3. Support staff during the transition:** The Commission has a [Getting to know the Standards for aged care staff presentation](#) that discusses the key changes coming into effect from 1 July. Customise and run this as a workshop for your staff.
- 4. Conduct a self-assessment:** Undertake self-assessment against the new Standards by using the [self-assessment tool](#) as if you were being quality assessed by the

Commission. Have different staff conduct the self-assessment and compare results. Talk to consumers and staff about their experience of care and service delivery. Use this information to identify areas for improvement.

- 5. Create a plan for continuous improvement:** Use the information from your self-assessment to identify areas for improvement. Create ongoing opportunities for input, feedback, questions and any concerns from consumers and staff to improve the quality of care and services to meet consumer needs, goals and preferences.

For those who weren't able to get to the full-day 'Preparing for the Standards' event, we are planning some half-day workshops. More details will be announced shortly and will be made available on the [Events section](#) of the Commission website.

## New framework ensures strong voice for aged care recipients

A new national framework was issued on 19 February 2019 by the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) to support aged care recipients to receive the best possible assistance from the Australian Government-funded advocates acting on their behalf.

The National Aged Care Advocacy Framework will ensure that people in all states and territories have access to consistently high quality, independent and free support from the Commonwealth Government's National Aged Care Advocacy Program if they need help with an aged care issue.

Included in its guiding principles is a strong emphasis on proactive and preventive advocacy, educating and assisting providers to embed the rights of consumers in their policies and practices, and using proven and tested practices delivered to a high standard by a competent and skilled advocacy workforce.

The framework was shaped by a public consultation process that also included peak organisations representing both consumers and aged care providers.

It will help advocates in OPAN's nine-member organisations to provide even stronger support and protection of senior Australians' rights.

**[Read more](#)**



# How the new Standards deal with feedback and complaints



The Commission is urging providers to be ‘complaints ready’ in the lead up to the new Aged Care Quality Standards this July.

The Commission’s complaints group Executive Director Shona Reid advised providers to ensure that consumers feel comfortable raising their concerns with them.

“Providers should be looking to develop a culture in their organisation that welcomes feedback and complaints, acknowledges mistakes, learns from them and implements improvements. The system must be accessible, confidential, prompt and fair,” Ms Reid said.

Ms Reid said a system for complaints resolution benefits both consumers and providers.

“By encouraging consumers to raise complaints and provide feedback about the care and services they receive, service providers can gain valuable insight into areas they can improve.”

“In line with ‘best practice complaints resolution’, resolving complaints within an organisation can help build relationships between consumers and the organisation.”

“Of course we are here to help when the consumer does not feel comfortable raising concerns directly with providers, however it is the provider’s responsibility to develop a culture that welcomes direct feedback.”

Under new Standard 6 Feedback and Complaints, service providers must have a system in place to resolve complaints, and to support consumers in making a complaint or providing feedback about the care and services they are receiving.

**Top tips for service providers: Managing Complaints factsheet**

**Standard 6 web page and factsheet (PDF, 266.21 KB)**

**Changed:** Friday, 5 April 2019 - 10:03am