



Newsletter - May 2019



Aged Care Quality Bulletin

Providing you with the latest information to support our vision of a world-class aged care service.

Issue #5, May 2019

On this page:

- [Commissioner message](#)
- [Don't miss our upcoming reform webinar](#)
- [Online learning about the new Standards a hit](#)
- [Online learning assistance in getting to know the Standards.](#)
- [Urgent reminder about influenza](#)
- [Ageing population set to almost double by 2050](#)
- [Regional providers preparing for the new Standards](#)
- [\\$500,000 for better aged care food](#)
- [Commission increases unannounced weekend visits](#)
- [Top tips for addressing concerns and complaints](#)

Commissioner message

[Back to top](#)

As we draw closer to 1 July, it's clear that everyone is increasingly focused on what we need to do to prepare for the introduction of the new Aged Care Quality Standards and Charter of Aged Care Rights.

These significant reforms are aimed at improving the consumer's experience and outcomes of care, and will make it easier for consumers and their representatives to understand what they can expect from their aged care services.

Throughout the transition to the new Standards, it has been encouraging to see the interest shown by providers across Australia in our education sessions, and in the support material on our website.

To continue this support, the Department of Health and the Commission are planning a **webinar** for 6 June, and providers are welcome to participate.

The Commission has also begun distributing an education pack to all aged care services containing guidance and resources material. These resources, and others, are all available on our website, and you can access the latest materials at **[agedcarequality.gov.au](https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au)**.

Other initiatives addressed in this edition of the bulletin include the success of our "Aged Care Quality Standards" video collaboration with Altura Learning, and planning underway for the launch of an interactive online learning education platform.

Information is also provided on the alert recently issued by the Commission's inaugural Chief Clinical Advisor, Dr Melanie Wroth, about managing this year's flu season. I encourage you to familiarise yourself with these recommendations for aged care services to prevent influenza as we move into winter.

Ms Janet Anderson PSM
Commissioner

Don't miss our upcoming reform webinar

The Department of Health and the Commission will host an Aged Care Quality Reform Update webinar on 6 June at 2-4pm (AEST).

The webinar will provide an update on the aged care quality reform program including the Aged Care Quality Standards, the single Charter of Aged Care Rights, clinical governance and open disclosure, and strengthened regulations to minimise the inappropriate use of physical and chemical restraint.

[Back to top](#)

A panel comprising representatives from the Department of Health and the Commission will include Commission Executive Directors Christina Bolger and Ann Wunsch.

Participants will have an opportunity to have their questions answered by the panel. Don't miss this opportunity to hear more about these important reforms.

Register for the [**webinar**](#).

Online learning about the new Standards a hit

There has been a high level of interest from service providers and their staff in the "Aged Care Quality Standards" video, produced in collaboration with Altura Learning and the Commission.

Since its launch on 24 April, more than 17,000 people have viewed the 30-minute video.

Feedback received suggests it is helping users to understand how the new Standards will affect Australia's aged care sector from 1 July.

Altura Learning members have written:

- The video was easy to watch, and its information was easy to understand.
- I learnt that we should give our consumers a voice to choose and decide.
- It helps the consumer improve their quality of life.
- You can do the course online at your own time.
- Simple and to the point about changes coming soon.
- Enhances our knowledge to provide good quality service.

One viewer also wrote: "Thank you for giving me a greater awareness of my responsibility as a carer."

You can watch the [**Aged Care Quality Standards**](#) video and also access learning resources on the Altura Learning website.

Online learning assistance in getting to know the Standards.

The Commission's Education and Engagement team will soon launch an interactive online aged care learning information system.

It will help to expand the reach of the Commission's education programs beyond the traditional face-to-face delivery of courses and workshops.

[Back to top](#)

The initial modules will focus on the upcoming Aged Care Quality Standards, and will support all types of aged care services providers to:

- meet the Aged Care Quality Standards
- deliver safe and quality care and services, and
- demonstrate tangible positive outcomes for consumers.

All nominated contacts of Commonwealth funded aged care service providers will soon receive an email with more information. The email will provide details on how to register and when the content will be available.

Learning content will be accessible from any PC, laptop, tablet or phone device with an internet connection.

Urgent reminder about influenza

The start to the 2019 influenza season has seen an unusually high number of cases: “substantially higher compared to this period in the previous five years,” according to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System (NNDSS).

In the year to 19 May, there had been 55,240 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza to the NNDSS – and 10,073 in the previous fortnight.

The NNDSS reported 119 influenza-related deaths in the year to 19 May.

Older people who contract influenza are more likely to require hospitalisation and suffer serious complications including pneumonia and death.

In a recent alert issued to the sector, the Commission’s Chief Clinical Advisor, Dr Melanie Wroth, said aged care service providers should be aware of measures that help prevent and control the spread of influenza:

- Annual vaccination is the single most important measure to prevent influenza. It is effective, safe, available now and free for Australians aged 65 years and over. It is compulsory for residential aged care providers to make vaccination available to residents.
- Wash hands often, particularly before and after contact with consumers. Encourage all staff and visitors to do the same
- Be alert to influenza symptoms
- Establish a plan to manage influenza activity

[Back to top](#)

- early reporting of a suspected outbreak of influenza
- quarantine arrangements
- Encourage staff and visitors, if unwell, to not attend an aged care service or other places where they could spread the infection

Dr Wroth's alert can be viewed on the Commission [website](#).

Ageing population set to almost double by 2050

A new background paper released by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety says the number of Australians aged 85 years or older in 2050 will require, "significant adjustments to the Australian economy and systems that support older people."

The paper estimates that by 2050, more than 1.5 million people or 3.7 per cent of the population will be aged 85 years of age. This compares with around 503,685 people today - or 2 per cent of the current population.

The paper, Medium- and long-term pressures on the system: the changing demographics of aged care, explores:

- Complex issues associated with the country's changing demographic profile, including changes in patterns of disease and dependency, the rising incidence of dementia, changing expectations and the changing cultural profile of the Australian community, and
- Current arrangements, future pressures and a greater need for preventative and restorative health.

The paper concludes:

- The total supply of care will need to increase, with large absolute rises being required in the level of provision in each part of the aged care spectrum,
- Cost pressures are likely, resulting from changes in the cost of different types of care. A decrease in the availability of informal care, due to low birth rates in recent decades, will result in fewer adult children to provide such care, and
- There will be a strong increase in the demand for community care. With fewer children to look after aged parents, the cost of community care will likely increase.

The paper also examines the changing composition of the aged care workforce and the need for the sector to act more flexibly.

Read the paper here: [publications page](#).

[Back to top](#)

Regional providers preparing for the new Standards

The Commission's 'Preparing for the new Standards' education series continued in April with multiple workshops held in regional locations.

These workshops support participants to understand and apply the guidance and resources material available on the Commission's website.

Feedback from the events suggests that information has been well received, and providers have indicated they felt more confident in addressing the Standards once they became familiar with the resources.

All Standards resources are available on the Commission's website. Among other things, they can be used to help develop and deliver an internal training program for staff, board members, consumers and their families.

Some of the resources available include:

- The Guidance and Resources to support the Aged Care Quality Standards,
- The interactive Chatterbox game,
- The Qassist module 'Getting to know the Standards for aged care staff',
- A short video, 'Preparing for the new Standards' and
- A 30-minute video produced in collaboration with Altura Learning.

All Standards resources can be found [here](#). In addition, a recording of our webinar, 'Getting to know the Standards' compliance assistance session and a supporting PowerPoint presentation is available [online](#).

\$500,000 for better aged care food

A \$500,000 Federal Government grant aims to boost the standard of food in Australia's aged care services.

The funding, which has been given as a grant to the foundation established by one of Australia's best-loved cooks, Maggie Beer, will support an online training course for aged care chefs and cooks.

[Back to top](#)

The quality of food was ranked lowest overall on the satisfaction scale by care recipients in the 2018 Consumer Experience Reports for residential aged care.

Since 2014, the Maggie Beer Foundation has offered face-to-face aged care food quality training, and the grant is expected to both greatly improve the program and make it more widely accessible.

The online program's 11 training modules – developed in partnership with William Angliss Institute and Altura Learning – will range across Cooking Essentials, Managing the Kitchen, Important Needs, Engaging with Residents and Specialist Knowledge.

The focus is on taste, freshness and particularly the nutritional content of meals made for those receiving aged care.

The series is in development and an availability date will be announced soon.

Commission increases unannounced weekend visits

The Commission recently increased the number of unannounced visits made to residential aged care services commencing on the weekend and after-hours to assist with the assessment and monitoring of performance within a 24-hour service delivery environment.

This builds on the Commission's after-hours and weekends monitoring visits that are already in place as a result of escalated concerns, referrals or identified risks. The extension of the monitoring program supports assessment and monitoring visits in the early hours of the morning, late in the evening, and across weekends.

To determine the focus of any unannounced assessment contact, our assessment team usually interviews the person in charge of the service and asks a series of questions to identify possible areas of risk. These questions are widely promoted, and available to view on the Commission [website](#).

Top tips for addressing concerns and complaints

It has been a busy first quarter for our Complaints Education team, who have delivered 12 face-to-face sessions for aged care services since 1 January.

[Back to top](#)

Each session includes information on how to raise concerns, the complaints process, common issues and some top tips for making and managing complaints.

Recent feedback from an aged care service provider said: “I would like to thank you and compliment the two staff who came out to present to our office. Their presentation was superb, and they were very approachable with questions.”

The Complaints Manager who presented at the session said, “The session went really well. We got some positive feedback at the end, describing it as very informative and useful to their staff.

“We received a lot of questions around fees, agreements, and complaints handling in relation to brokerage arrangements.”

Complaints education sessions are proving valuable for aged care consumers, service providers and their staff. The team ensures that sessions are tailored to suit specific events and audiences, and that they provide help in understanding the importance of how to manage and raise concerns about aged care quality and services.

To request a complaints education session, email [**complaintsstakeholder@agedcarequality.gov.au**](mailto:complaintsstakeholder@agedcarequality.gov.au).

Changed: Wednesday, 5 June 2019 - 9:47am

[Back to top](#)