



Australian Government
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Engage
Empower
Safeguard



Digital and Data Strategy 2026–2029

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, water and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Artwork by [Dreamtime Creative](#). Read more about the story behind the artwork in the Commission's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#).



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Executive Summary

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's Digital and Data Strategy supports the agency to achieve its purpose by providing a set of principles that guide the investment, design and implementation of digital and data capabilities. The strategy builds on and embeds the significant change in the Commission's capability and operating model over the past three years, taking into account lessons learned over that time, the path forward, and the changes in the broader environment.

Core Focus

1. Clear principles to guide digital and data capabilities

The strategy is anchored by four principles that inform all digital and data-related decisions. These principles have evolved from those in the last Digital Strategy to account for the material expansion in the Commission's capability, changes to its operating model, and the commencement of the new Aged Care Act. In addition, data and digital disciplines are tightly integrated in this strategy for the first time. This is a reflection of the ongoing commitment for these two disciplines to work hand in glove in the pursuit of providing better services to stakeholders.

The principles in this document are:

1. Strategic Alignment
2. Stakeholder Focus
3. Modernisation
4. Trust.

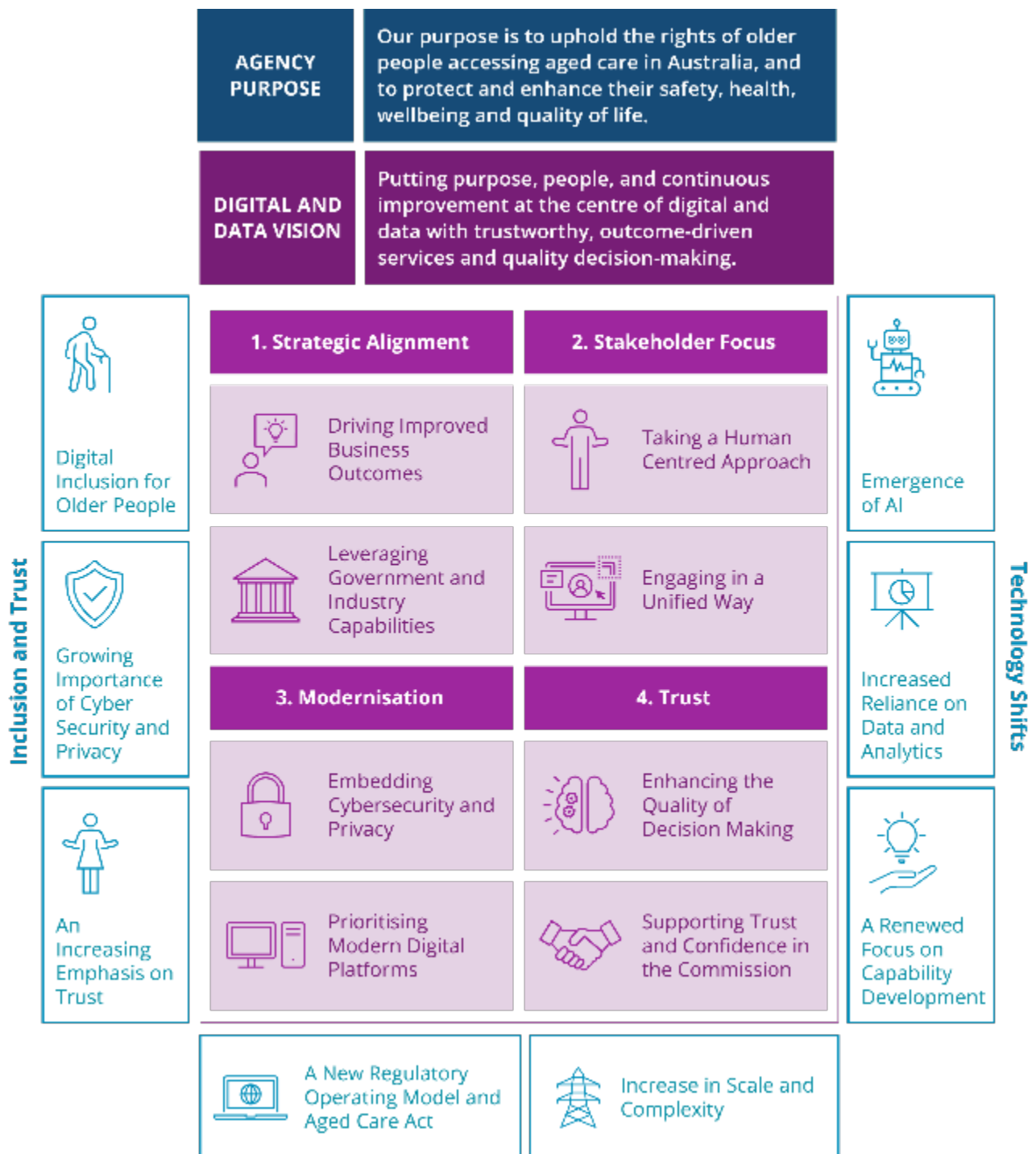
Together, these ensure that the Commission's digital and data efforts are trustworthy, reliable and modern.

2. Responding to key drivers of change

Major changes are underway, driven by the increased scale and complexity of regulation, the new Aged Care Act, rapid advances in technology, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI), and heightened expectations around digital inclusion, cybersecurity, data sharing and data privacy. This strategy addresses the need to support a significantly expanded regulatory mandate, foster digital inclusion for older people, respond to sector-wide AI adoption, and evolve cyber and privacy practices while safely and ethically sharing data and strengthening both technological infrastructure and workforce capability.

Following is a representation of the Digital and Data Strategy on a page.

Strategy on a page



Strategy Vision



The Commission's Purpose:

The Commission plays a leadership role in advancing the government's vision for older people to trust and have confidence that aged care services will protect their safety, independence and quality of life.

Our purpose is to uphold the rights of older people accessing aged care in Australia, and to protect and enhance their safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life.



Digital and Data Vision:

The vision for the Digital and Data strategy demonstrates how the Commission can foster confidence in the aged care system by leveraging its digital and data capabilities.

Putting purpose, people, and continuous improvement at the centre of our digital and data work, supporting trustworthy, outcome-driven services and quality decision-making.

Strategy Principles

Introduction to the Digital and Data Principles

The following principles will guide the Commission in deploying and operating its digital and data assets and services. All decisions regarding investment, process, and culture, related to digital or data capabilities, should align with these principles.

Together, the principles ensure that digital and data initiatives keep people and the Commission's business at the centre, while also being trustworthy, reliable and modern. As part of this, they support members of the Digital branch and the Data, Analytics and Intelligence branch to collaborate effectively with each other and with the wider Commission, ensuring that digital and data efforts deliver genuine value.

1. Strategic Alignment

To maximise value from our digital and data investments, we are committed to ensuring that all initiatives are aligned with the Commission's overarching strategy and objectives. This principle focuses on establishing strong governance, clear decision-making processes, and integrated planning to drive coherent, enterprise-wide outcomes.

Driving Improved Business Outcomes

All initiatives, decisions, and performance measures will be developed collaboratively and prioritised in line with business needs. This means:

- a. Digital and Data investment priorities will be guided through a governance process aligned to the regulatory operating model, regulatory strategies, the Corporate Plan, policies, and procedures.
- b. Work undertaken by the Digital and Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branches can be traced back to strategic goals and high-value use cases.
- c. Investment in the quality and resilience of supporting technologies and operations is recognised as essential for an agency to be trusted and reliable.
- d. Corporate systems should be appropriately prioritised to ensure minimum standards of automation and support and are underpinned with appropriate funding, resourcing and executive ownership.

Leveraging Government and Industry Capabilities

The Commission will partner across government and the aged care sector to maximise the value of the community's digital and data assets. It will:

- a. Monitor the government and sector ecosystems to identify digital and data capabilities that might further the Commission's goals.
- b. Have an Application Programming Interface (API) first approach to facilitate access to the Commission's data and digital systems.
- c. Enable secure, standards-based integration across systems, providing an improved user experience.
- d. Leverage government and sector data and services where appropriate, before building new ones.
- e. Actively share data responsibly, in line with privacy and security legislation, policies and standards, for the benefit of older people and their families.
- f. Ensure that authorised people, both internal and external to the Commission, can discover, access, and use appropriate segments of the Commission's data.

2. Stakeholder Focus

Recognising the diverse needs of those we serve and work with, this principle ensures that our digital and data activities are designed around the expectations, feedback, and experiences of our stakeholders. We prioritise engagement, collaboration, and responsive service delivery to create positive and meaningful outcomes.

Taking a Human Centred Approach

A human-centred approach first considers our staff's needs and experience, and then the application of technology. This means that:

- a. All digital delivery will be backed by human-centred design, including adequate user research and traceability from all features through to a clearly understood user need.
- b. In designing and assuring systems, the Commission will prioritise accessibility standards and consider potential future use by older people.
- c. Initiatives should work towards a 'joined-up' seamless and simple experience for all Commission staff, older people, providers and other stakeholders.
- d. This approach should result in improved human-centred design capabilities across the Commission, including the Digital Branch and Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branch.

Engaging In a Unified Way

Delivering modern digital capabilities requires alignment with priorities from the broader Commission, as well as collaboration between multiple teams, vendors, agencies and other stakeholders. The Commission will deliver digital and data solutions using a partnering approach:

- a. The prioritisation criteria for all Digital Branch and Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branch initiatives will favour stabilising and building on current initiatives over creating new functionality.
- b. The Commission will deliver digital and data capabilities at a pace defined by the risk appetite, funding, and resource availability, as well as its ability to implement change.
- c. The Commission will continue to unify and integrate digital and data processes into a model that focuses on delivering high-quality business outcomes.
- d. The Digital Branch and the Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branch will have a common governance process for prioritisation and decision-making and will jointly develop policies for the use of digital and data assets.
- e. Clear service boundaries will be established between the Digital Branch and the Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branch.
- f. The Digital Branch will provide services to the Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branch and the wider organisation under agreed-upon Service Level Agreements (SLAs).
- g. Business areas must engage with the Digital and Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branches on anything digital or data-related, rather than going directly to vendors or undertaking initiatives on their own.

3. Modernisation

To remain effective and future-ready, we embrace digital innovation and the continual improvement of our systems and processes. This principle drives the adoption of contemporary technologies, automation, and best practices to enhance efficiency, adaptability, and support the Commission's evolving requirements.

Embedding Cybersecurity and Privacy

The need to ensure appropriate cybersecurity and privacy controls is embedded in everything the Commission does. This means that the Commission will:

- a. Design new capabilities with security in mind, striking a balance between risk and outcomes.
- b. Regularly assess existing capabilities for cybersecurity vulnerabilities.
- c. Continue to invest in cybersecurity and privacy risk mitigations to address the threat landscape.
- d. Increase cybersecurity and privacy awareness, knowledge and skills through dedicated programs. These will include the Digital and the Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branches.
- e. Respect privacy, with strong controls and transparent, responsible data handling designed to build public and stakeholder trust.
- f. Ensure all digital and data systems are aligned with the Commission's cyber and privacy risk posture.

Prioritising Modern Digital Platforms

To meet modern service expectations, the Commission will build on previous success by continuing to invest in flexible, integrated digital platforms. The Commission will:

- a. Ensure our decisions on investment in digital and data align with our IT architecture principles.
- b. Design for technical resilience to protect the Commission from changes to systems and policies outside the Commission's control.
- c. Align all system designs with the Commission's architecture principles through robust governance processes.
- d. Design for agile, scalable, decoupled and modularised solutions, enabling faster response to operational needs and innovations.
- e. Ensure investments consider how they drive continuous improvement of the Commission's regulatory activities.
- f. Ensure new systems integrate across the aged care ecosystem.
- g. Embrace emerging technologies to help the Commission achieve its goals.
- h. Ensure legacy systems are decommissioned when new systems replace their functionality.

4. Trust

Protecting the integrity, privacy, and security of our data and systems is essential to sustaining the confidence of the public and our partners. This principle underpins our commitment to ethical data stewardship, robust compliance, and transparent operations, forming the foundation for trust in all that we do.

Enhancing the Quality of Decision-Making

Quality decision-making relies on reliable, accessible and high-quality data, built off a foundation of good management and governance. To achieve this outcome:

- a. The Commission will invest in skills, leadership, and a culture that encourages responsible and confident use of data at all levels of the organisation.
- b. Staff must have adequate levels of data literacy and be confident comprehending and interpreting data.
- c. Data will be treated as a valued business asset requiring stewardship and alignment with business goals.
- d. Data must be well-managed: defined consistently throughout the agency, have a known source, and have stewardship.
- e. Data sources, governance and analytical capabilities must be assessed and refined over time to keep pace with changing needs, technologies, and risks.
- f. Decisions at all levels should draw on both operational and analytical data to ensure they are informed by what is happening within the Commission as well as across the aged care sector.
- g. Access to data held by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing that is fundamental to the Commission's operations must be real-time and bi-directional.

Supporting Trust and Confidence in the Commission

Trust is a cornerstone of the Commission's approach to regulation. The Commission seeks to build trust in and through our digital and data assets and services by ensuring transparency, safeguarding information, engaging stakeholders, and delivering reliable, secure, forward-looking capability. This means the Commission will:

- a. Continue to refine its risk models to ensure proactive, targeted regulation for the benefit of older people.
- b. Be open, transparent, and accountable; sharing information on the Commission's performance and the performance of providers.
- c. Acquire a better understanding of the unique circumstances and challenges faced by different stakeholders of the aged care sector.
- d. Demonstrate ethical stewardship of data assets to improve confidence that the Commission will use data appropriately.
- e. Demonstrate a strong cybersecurity and data privacy posture to improve confidence that sharing data with the Commission is safe.
- f. Deliver high-quality digital platforms that older people, staff and providers can rely upon.
- g. Demonstrate a balanced approach to the adoption of emerging digital technologies where risks and benefits are carefully weighed before adoption.
- h. Demonstrate forward thinking by continuing to assess emerging technologies and new ways of working to identify efficiency and effectiveness improvements across the Commission.



A Look Ahead

This Strategy is not intended to be a detailed execution plan. However, to align with the intent of the above principles, a high-level direction is provided covering emerging challenges and opportunities as well as advice on how these might be addressed.

What Success Looks Like

The Commission seeks to be a trusted, rights-based, risk-led, data-confident regulator delivering reliable, modern digital services for staff, providers and older people. Information needed for proportionate, timely decisions will be discoverable and accessible, with clear stewardship and secure, real-time data flows across the ecosystem. The human-centred approach will be visible in every channel; privacy and cybersecurity will be embedded by design; and transparency about performance and insights will continue to strengthen public confidence.

Internally, the Digital and Data functions will continue to operate in close partnership with shared governance and clear service boundaries. Emerging technologies (including AI) will have increased adoption, in line with government and community expectations, improving outcomes and productivity. Externally, providers will experience consistent integration and guidance, older people and families can readily access clear, multi-channel information, and the Commission will be known for sharing performance and sector data openly.

Embedding systems designed to support the new Act

In the years leading up to this strategy, the Commission has invested in building a suite of core systems designed to improve regulatory capabilities and support the new Act. These systems went live when the new Act commenced in November 2025.

While these systems are being stabilised (embedding phase), the default priority will be fixing functionality that is not working, rather than introducing new systems or functions. During this embedding phase, all changes to the digital and data portfolio will be tightly governed to ensure the focus remains on the completion and stabilisation of these core systems.

To ensure the balance between the benefits of embedding with the needs of new or improved capability, digital and data prioritisation and governance will be strengthened. This will be done in line with Strategy Principle 1 (Strategic Alignment) and Principle 2 (Stakeholder Focus), which require the governance process be aligned to the priorities of the Commission and the framework set by the enterprise architecture function.

An identified refresh point in 2028

The strategy spans Q1 2026 to Q1 2029. A strategy review point will be planned to occur in mid-2028. There are several reasons for this relatively short review period. They are:

1. At the time of writing this strategy, it is not clear how the implementation of the new Act has affected the operation of the sector and the experience of older people. By mid-2027, this will be clearer, and a review to assess the performance of the Commission's systems is recommended.
2. AI and other technologies will continue to evolve rapidly. In the medium term, they are likely to have had significant impact on the operation of the sector, with benefits and risks not yet fully understood. These technologies also have the potential to enable the Commission to increase productivity, and to try different approaches to generating and analysing regulatory intelligence.
3. A review in mid-2028 presents an opportunity to reassess the Strategy and implement any necessary adjustments to respond to technological changes or shifts in adoption across the sector.

Bringing the strategy to life

To implement this strategy, the Commission will need to:

1. Continue to deliver capability and technology uplifts across our digital and data portfolios, in line with the Commission's strategic priorities.
2. Strengthen the unified approach to digital and data services.
3. Align funding of our digital and data capabilities with the Commission's Funding Model.
4. Grow knowledge and understanding of the sector through improved data sharing among stakeholders.
5. Identify and implement productivity gains.
6. Grow the digital and data maturity of the workforce, the sector, older people and their families.

The following sections address each of these points in more detail.

1. Continue to optimise the Digital and Data portfolios in line with the current and future Commission priorities

Optimising the Digital and Data portfolio may include (but not limited to):

- Addressing emerging government priorities.
- Optimising systems that support the new Act, including supporting our ability to use data to make decisions.
- Ongoing enhancements to the Data-Lakehouse and supporting systems.

- Identifying and implementing process improvements based on the use of emerging AI capabilities.
- Implementation of basic corporate systems, including document and human resource management

This work will be planned in detail and executed through annual Business Planning. In parallel, a refresh of the Commission's Enterprise Architecture "Town Plan" will provide the flexibility to handle changing needs and priorities, whilst laying the foundations for an efficient, capable digital and data portfolio.

2. Strengthen the unified approach to digital and data services

In line with Principle 2 (Stakeholder Focus), a key foundation of a unified approach between digital and data services is joint membership of the Digital and Data governance structures.

Service boundaries between each branch and with business areas will be strengthened with uplifted accountability and transparency mechanisms (e.g. via Service Level Agreements).

3. Move to an operating environment based on an optimised business funding model

Over the next year, the Commission will move to a business-as-usual focus. To operate in this environment, the Commission needs:

- Highly reliable systems needing minimal operational support. These systems should have strong release management controls and be audited for cybersecurity threats and privacy issues (Principle 3: Modernisation and Principle 4: Trust).
- High-quality operational support systems and processes (Principle 2: Stakeholder Focus).
- A digital working environment closely aligned to the needs of users (Principle 1: Strategic Alignment).
- Flexible architectures that ensure changes can be made easily (Principle 3: Modernisation).
- An IT-literate workforce capable of managing simple IT issues (Principle 2: Stakeholder Focus and Principle 3: Modernisation).

4. Grow knowledge and understanding of the sector through improved data sharing among stakeholders

Improve data sharing with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Under the new Aged Care Act, the ability to access data promptly is of paramount importance. Commission staff facing higher workloads and changed regulatory responsibilities will need to access data without unnecessary delays or blockers.

To address this issue in line with Principle 4 (Trust), the Commission will continue to work with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing to resolve integration challenges and improve real-time two-way access to data.

Enable discoverable data and systems

Across the Australian Government and the aged care sector, there is a wealth of data and system capabilities. In line with Principle 1 (Strategic Alignment), the Commission will need to establish a process to monitor the government and sector ecosystem, pinpointing potential data and system capabilities that can support the Commission's objectives. A similar capability could be utilised to assess and enhance the discoverability of data within the Commission and across the sector.

Enable Whole-of-Commission Data Stewardship

To underpin other data initiatives, the Commission's governance will be enhanced to better oversee policies and priorities for Privacy, Data Stewardship, and integrity in decision-making. In line with Principle 4 (Trust), this includes establishing data governance to oversee policies and priorities for privacy, data stewardship, and integrity in decision-making.

5. Identify and implement productivity gains

Improve reliability and reduce painful workflows

The Digital and Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branches will continue to work with business areas to identify and eliminate inefficient workflows and processes in line with Principle 1 (Strategic Alignment). This can increase the focus on high-value work, improve staff morale, and reduce errors.

Selectively adopt emerging technology including AI

Emerging technologies, including Generative AI, are significantly impacting all sectors, providing opportunities for productivity benefits, whilst also carrying some risk.

While acknowledging these risks, the Commission will continue to explore and leverage the business benefits offered by these technologies. (Principle 3: Modernisation).

Through careful adoption, these productivity benefits will allow the Commission's resources to focus on higher-value work.

6. Grow Digital and Data Maturity

The Australian Government recommends staff have a minimum set of capabilities in data literacy, cybersecurity, privacy policy, and human-centred design.

In executing this strategy, the Commission will continue to run programs that ensure staff capabilities attain or exceed the government's minimum capability level.

Specifically, to support the needs of this strategy, capability building will include:

- Continual investment in, and dedicated activities for, building digital and data capability within the Digital Branch and Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branch (Principle 2: Stakeholder Focus, Principle 3: Modernisation and 4: Trust).
- Data literacy and the effective use of data in decision-making (Principle 4: Trust).
- Cybersecurity and privacy (Principle 3: Modernisation).
- Human-centred design (Principle 2: Stakeholder Focus).



Appendix: Drivers of Change

The following Drivers have been identified as the eight most significant forces requiring consideration. Combined with the business goals and decisions of the Commission (such as its mission and regulatory strategy), they inform the choices in principles shown earlier.

1. A New Regulatory Operating Model and Aged Care Act

This Strategy enables the Commission to safeguard and protect the rights of older people who receive aged care including the right to: high quality care, feel and be safe, and be free from abuse.

The Regulatory Strategy 2025-26 uses a rights-based, risk-led, proportionate approach based on the “regulatory diamond” (see following page). Under this approach, best practice within the sector will be promoted while non-compliance will be managed proportionate to the level of risk presented to older people.

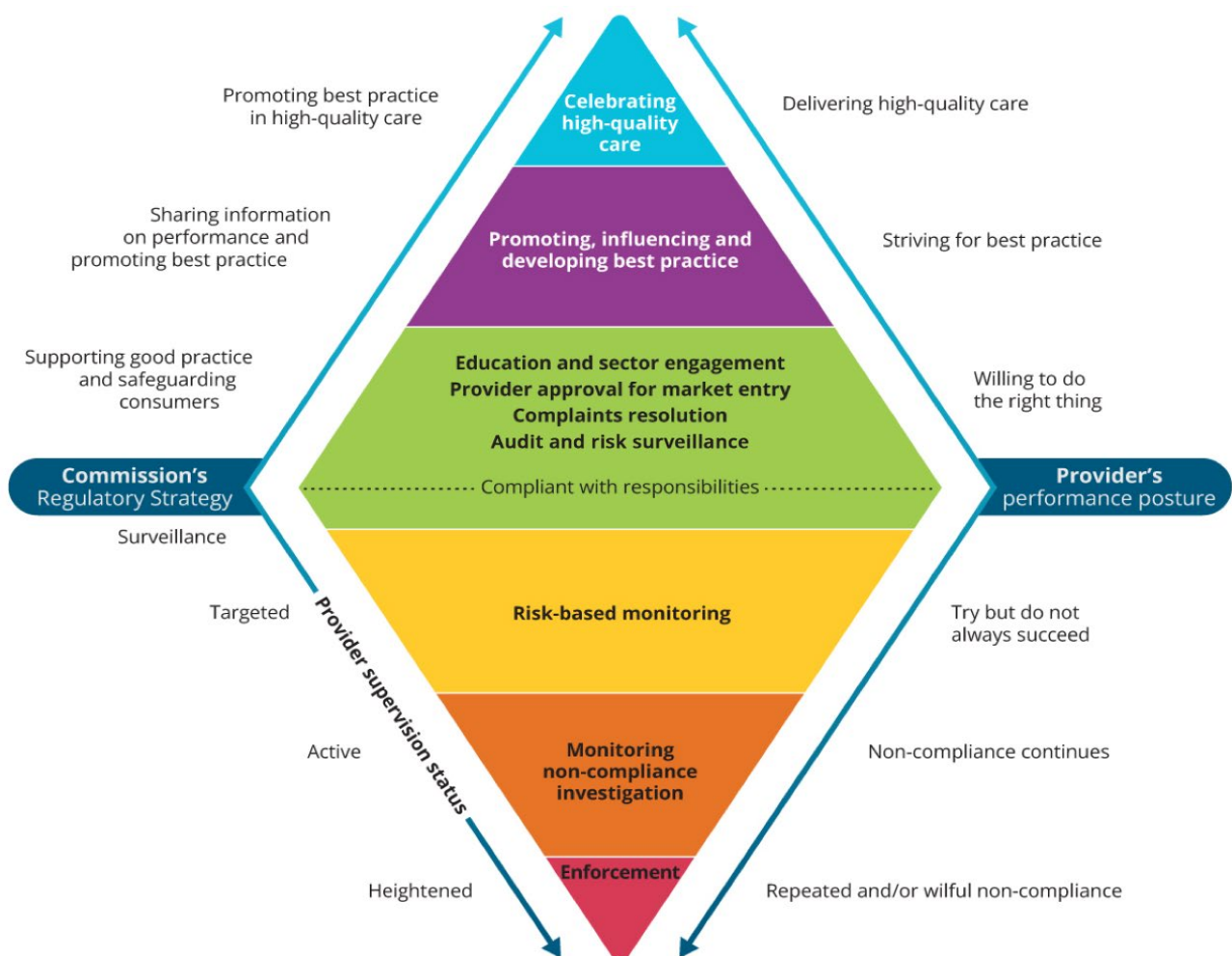
A key driver of the updated regulatory strategy is the new Aged Care Act, which commenced on 1 November 2025. The Act recognises the evolving nature of the aged care sector and community expectations. It strengthens Quality Standards and expands the Commission’s regulatory powers.

The Act sets expectations for the sector and the regulator that are materially more proactive and rigorous.

The change in definition of regulated entities will increase the number of entities that the Commission must oversee, as it now includes sole traders. This drives a material increase in the required maturity and sophistication of the Commission’s digital and data systems, as well as the literacy and capability of its people to use these systems at the new scale.

The new Aged Care Act significantly broadens the Commission’s regulatory responsibilities, with changes required to the Commission’s systems and data practices.

Aged Care Regulatory Diamond



2. Increased Scale and Complexity

Well-resourced Digital and Data, Analytics and Intelligence branches support the Commission's regulatory activities

Since its establishment in 2018, the Commission has increased its personnel fivefold, developed a range of advanced capabilities and forged a strong relationship with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

The Independent Capability Review (2023) highlighted the need for growth, noting that while the Commission had made progress, it needed stronger capacity in governance, leadership, and processes to fulfil its expanded role. In response, the government has invested significantly in enhancing the Commission's capabilities.

The 2024–25 Federal Budget allocated \$110.9 million over four years specifically to boost the Commission's regulatory capabilities and prepare for the new Aged Care Act.

Both the Commission's Digital and Data, Analytics and Intelligence branches have increased in number and capability in line with this investment. The Digital branch supports the activities of approximately 2,000 staff, overseeing potentially many thousands of aged care providers (including sole traders), which requires a comprehensive portfolio of ICT systems, a scalable and reliable technology infrastructure, and support from a skilled, multidisciplinary Digital team.

Within these 2000 staff there is a broad diversity of generations and digital culture. From Baby Boomers who forged most of their careers before and during the growth of the internet, to the emerging Gen Z who will work their entire careers with Generative AI support.

The Data, Analytics, and Intelligence Branch has also increased in size, expanded its responsibilities, evolved its risk modelling, and forged a close relationship with the Digital branch.



A well-managed digital infrastructure drives confidence in the Commission's systems

The Commission's digital infrastructure capability has expanded to support the increases in staffing numbers and the impact of the growing number of sector interactions.

Working with a rapidly evolving ICT industry, the Digital branch is responsible for managing day-to-day operations and changes from the Commission, other government departments and vendors.

Providing a stable digital ecosystem is a challenging and complex task. The reliability of the Commission's regulatory service is dependent on maintaining the quality of the supporting digital infrastructure.

The Commission's dependence on both data and digital infrastructure also means business continuity planning and testing have become a priority.

A well-governed application portfolio supporting business systems

Since 2021, the Commission's application portfolio has undergone significant changes. Many of these changes will continue to be bedded down during late 2025 and 2026.

While significant progress has been made, a backlog of essential systems remains, including corporate systems such as document management and human resource management. The Commission will need to balance its ability to resource and implement improvements to the systems portfolio while ensuring a reliable and secure digital ecosystem.

Strong whole-of-Commission Digital governance, supported by expert advice from digital and data professionals, will be fundamental to balancing the evolution of the digital portfolio. As part of this, Enterprise Architecture is critical in ensuring the portfolio evolves in a planned, coordinated, business-oriented, cost-effective way.

The Commission's ICT systems have undergone a significant change, which, together with the new Aged Care Act, will be bedded in over the next 12 to 18 months. This will limit the Commission's ability to implement further system changes during that time.

3. Emergence of AI

The Commission's strategic position on AI adoption

The Commission is embracing artificial intelligence (AI) as both an opportunity and a strategic enabler, improving the ability to protect older Australians, strengthen regulatory intelligence, and reduce administrative burden on its workforce. At the Commission, AI is being adopted in a responsible and transparent way, with right-sized governance and human accountability.

AI presents significant opportunities to improve productivity, support better decision making and deliver better outcomes for older people. The Commission is committed to ensuring AI use in the agency is human-centric, ethical, fair, safe, and responsible.

AI policies across government are evolving

The Commission's approach is aligned with key government policies, such as the Australia's AI Ethics Principles, the principles outlined in the Automated Decision-Making Better Practice Guide, the Policy for the responsible use of AI in government, and the Voluntary AI Safety Standard. These policies guided the development of the Commission's AI governance, assurance and approval pathways.

Uses of AI with the potential to influence regulatory action, affect rights or entitlements, involve sensitive information, or create material safety, fairness or reputational risks, will be escalated through established governance pathways, with oversight from relevant governance bodies and senior leaders.

Clear governance and accountability arrangements will underpin every decision made in how AI is adopted. AI capabilities will complement, rather than replace, human judgement and decisions affecting older Australians will continue to be made with human oversight.

AI and our people

Successful adoption of AI will require more than technology alone. Realising the benefits of AI requires ongoing evolution in ways of working, capability, and organisational culture.

The Commission is committed to building AI literacy and confidence across the agency through capability development, practical guidance and access to approved AI tools. Through investment, staff will be trained to build and maintain the skills to use AI effectively, safely, ethically and responsibly. The workforce will be supported to use approved AI tools consistently with effective frameworks, standards, procedures and acceptable use guidelines, informed by whole-of-government best practice and strategic partners.

The value of existing AI capabilities, workforce skills and technologies will be utilised before seeking new investment. The initial focus is on safe productivity uplift and enterprise AI use cases that help staff work more efficiently in their day-to-day activities.

The opportunity

The Commission will support and encourage staff to embrace, identify and adopt AI capabilities that improve services, strengthen regulatory intelligence and deliver meaningful outcomes.

Business areas will lead the identification of opportunities, working collaboratively with the Digital Branch and the Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branch. Opportunities will be assessed according to their potential benefits, alignment with Commission priorities and ability to be implemented safely and responsibly.

Established governance arrangements will support the prioritisation and oversight of AI opportunities, ensuring that innovation is pursued in a manner consistent with the Commission's values, risk appetite and regulatory responsibilities.

AI can serve as a crucial tool, enabling the Commission to expand its capabilities and drive efficiencies in processes.



4. Increased Reliance on Data and Analytics

More data enables improved risk modelling and risk-led targeting of high-risk providers

Over the past three years, the Commission has increased its collection and access to data from the sector. Data collection will, in some cases, be on a near-real-time basis. The Data, Analytics and Intelligence Branch is also managing participation in national care and support economy and industry data initiatives (aged care, disability, health, childcare, and fraud fusion).

A broader and more comprehensive pool of data will enable increasingly sophisticated risk modelling that can identify high-risk providers, enabling targeted oversight and more efficient resource allocation. This will allow the Commission to continue to reduce its reliance on data from periodic audits to continuous analysis, utilising data from provider metrics, workforce information, incidents, complaints, and feedback.

Increasing needs for foundational infrastructure

Adopting risk-led regulation has significant implications for the Commission's digital and data infrastructure. It requires systems to collect, integrate, and analyse diverse data streams. The Commission has implemented a data lakehouse and analytics platforms to facilitate the comprehensive linking and querying of information from complaints, incidents, audits, provider reports, and external sources. Additionally, the Commission is enhancing its information-sharing tools to integrate data from other agencies when appropriate.

The timely collection of more sector data will enable the Commission to enhance its risk-based models, facilitating near real-time, continuous analysis of the sector's performance.

5. A Renewed Focus on Capability Development

The Commission has long recognised that its digital and data workforce is a cornerstone in successfully executing its mission. Over the last few years, the Commission has targeted investments in the recruitment of digital and data specialists, broad training initiatives, and organisational restructuring.

Moving forwards, the Commission is continuing to evolve its workforce to meet the requirements of its regulatory strategy.

Such changes are consistent with government peers, who have embedded best-practice digital and data expertise within their operational teams and continue to invest in training and learning programs.

The Commission's capability investments are driven by several factors, including the findings in the 2023 "Independent Capability Review", the Commission's regulatory strategy and operating model, and the principles from the "APS Strategic Commissioning Framework" (SCF). Importantly, the SCF is a government-wide principles-based framework that sets government's priority on building APS capability, reducing reliance on externals for "core" work and thereby safeguarding the integrity, expertise, and trust in the public service.

The Australian government and peer organisations have recognised that a digitally savvy workforce is the cornerstone of a data-driven organisation.



6. Digital Inclusion for Older People

The growing importance of digital inclusion

Digital inclusion will continue to be a consideration as an emerging group of older people who are more familiar with technology join the aged care ecosystem. In parallel, as digital channels become more prevalent, understanding and designing for the different digital inclusion needs of older First Nations people is of increasing importance.

Recognising the growing adoption of technology by older people, the Commission is building multi-channel access to complaints, education, and provider information, offering alternative formats and support for individuals with disabilities, diverse backgrounds or limited digital skills.

While digital channels continue to expand, policymakers emphasise that they should enhance rather than replace traditional access methods, such as phone support or face-to-face assistance. This approach is consistent with the Digital and Data Government Strategy, which states “the Government will ensure everyone, whether they are living with disability, live in remote and regional communities, are culturally or linguistically diverse, have limited digital ability, or otherwise, can access and engage with the government services and programs they need”.

The Commission will continue to be sensitive to the community’s growing demand for digitally delivered government services. Areas such as mobile apps, voice interfaces, and real-time data access will become increasingly important.

The government aims to be a leader in inclusion

Government policy emphasises that digital transformation must be inclusive and accessible, ensuring no one is left behind. The new Aged Care Act incorporates a Statement of Rights for older people, guaranteeing access to information and dignity of choice concerning digital services. Peer agencies, such as Services Australia and the Australian Taxation Office, provide valuable insights into striking a balance between digital-first approaches and inclusive service delivery.

The growing adoption of technology by older people, carers, providers and federal government agencies means the Commission has a unique role in ensuring effective digital inclusion for all stakeholder groups.

7. The Growing Importance of Cyber Security and Privacy

Cybersecurity and data privacy are critical priorities for the Commission, given the information managed; sensitive personal and health information and information about corporate entities.

The Commission must balance its use of information and sharing of data with its obligations under the government's cyber standards.

Cyber threats are increasing

Cyber threats are expected to continue evolving and may increasingly target the health and care sectors, with the widespread use of AI amplifying cyber threats by an order of magnitude.

Older people will be particularly susceptible, as they often lack the same level of sensitivity to cyber threats that digital natives possess. For instance, AI-powered voice synthesis is far more likely to deceive older people. The increasing number of older people seeking email services from the aged care sector will also expose them to potential AI-amplified phishing attacks.

In parallel, the concern from Australians about misinformation and disinformation is on the rise; with ACMA reporting 75% of Australian's are concerned about misinformation, up from 69% in 2022¹. This escalation increases pressure on institutions to safeguard the credibility, integrity and clarity of their communications and data.

Whilst many of these new threats fall under the purview of other government agencies, they highlight the increasing risk in the landscape that must be factored into this strategy.

The Commission's cybersecurity posture will also require continual improvement. Technology paradigms such as Zero Trust Architecture may become the norm in government agencies, which would alter how the Commission manages identity and access in its systems.

Finally, incident response preparedness will be a key future aspect; agencies will refine their ability to respond to cyber incidents, possibly participating in cross-government (or cross-sector) cyber war-game exercises (like the CORIE tests conducted for financial institutions).

Public expectations and understanding of privacy

The public's expectations regarding privacy and data stewardship will continue to mature, as will the expectation of greater data transparency and access.

AI will bring privacy and security together. By 2028, privacy laws might incorporate provisions regarding automated decision-making and strict consent for AI use on personal data. The Commission will need to ensure that any AI or advanced analytics in use complies with those standards. No AI solution should be used to make a regulatory decision without appropriate human oversight and privacy safeguards.

The threat vectors for cybersecurity and privacy continue to expand as older people increasingly adopt technology, and AI advances.

¹ *Digital platforms' efforts under voluntary arrangements to combat misinformation and disinformation, Third*

8. An Increasing Emphasis on Trust

Trust is a cornerstone of the Commission's approach to Aged Care regulation. One of its key priorities (as noted in the Regulatory Strategy priority of "public confidence and trust") is to build public confidence in both the Commission's ability to regulate effectively, and in its efforts to hold aged care providers and workers accountable.

As trust increases, older people, workers, and aged care providers will have increased confidence that the Commission is consistently fair, balanced and effective in how it regulates aged care.

Older people must be able to trust that if something goes wrong, their wellbeing will be the highest priority for workers, providers and the Commission.



