



# AAG

Australian  
Association of  
Gerontology

## Research and Policy Update

December 2017

This update from AAG provides an overview of current ways you can get involved in policy development to improve the experience of ageing- though both AAG and other organisations' research and consultation processes. It also includes some resources you may find interesting that have been developed by other organisations and the Australian Government.

If you would like to have any of your opportunities to get involved in policy-related work and/or publications outside of the usual academic and commercial channels (so called "grey literature") included in the next update, please email [ssouth@aag.asn.au](mailto:ssouth@aag.asn.au).

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## Get involved

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### AAG submission to the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce

On 4 December 2017, AAG representatives (including members of AAG's [Ageing Workforce and Education Special Interest Group \(AWE SIG\)](#)) attended a Summit held by the Taskforce in Melbourne.

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AAG has started preparing its submission to this Taskforce. **Please send any information or issues you think should be highlighted in AAG's submission to the Taskforce in response to the above Terms of Reference to Dr Sandra South (one of [AAG's Senior Policy and Research Officers](#)) at [ssouth@aag.asn.au](mailto:ssouth@aag.asn.au) by 22 January 2018.**

This includes any recent research findings that will impact the taskforce objectives. Where relevant, please provide a brief summary (50-100 words), references of published papers/books, grants awarded, or projects underway.

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The Minister for Aged Care, [the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP](#), announced the appointment of Professor John Pollaers as the independent chair of the Taskforce on 14 September 2017 and [taskforce membership was announced](#) on 1 November 2017 (see the [Taskforce membership](#) here). You can follow the work of the Taskforce and [read more on the Department of Health's website](#).

The [purpose of the Taskforce](#) is to develop a strategy for growing and sustaining the workforce providing aged care services and support for older people, to meet their care needs in a variety of settings across Australia. The Taskforce will place particular emphasis on:

- Workforce planning covering workforce size and structure, managing growth and changes in service requirements, mix of occupations, workforce roles and distinct workforce needs in different care settings and market catchments.
- Supply and retention of the right workers with the right aptitudes in the right locations, and securing and sustaining up-to-date skills.
- The capacity of providers as employers, and the role of sector leadership, to equip the workforce to meet service requirements, needs and expectations of quality of care and services.
- Building sector-wide capabilities to innovate and extend new ways of working tailored to the needs of the older people who use aged care services, their families, carers and communities.

In undertaking its work, the Taskforce will be expected to:

- Assess trends, emerging issues and potential scenarios relevant to the current and future workforce.
- Cover the entire aged care workforce engaged in providing care and services, including support staff, contracted services and volunteers.
- Work in the context of aged care system policy settings, integrity, consumer safeguards and funding.
- Consider wider government policy settings of relevance to the workforce.
- Have regard to recent submissions to and reports of relevant inquiries on aged care workforce matters, and government responses.
- Engage and consult widely to ensure all points of view are heard and considered.
- Integrate in its work an inclusive and responsive workforce to support the diverse needs of older people.
- Ensure coverage of regional, rural, remote and very remote workforce issues.
- Consider cross-sectoral challenges and opportunities, particularly with the health, disability, education and employment sectors.
- Incorporate short term, medium term and longer term actions as part of a sustainable strategy.

The [consultation plan for the Taskforce](#) includes a public submission process between December 2017 – February 2018.

## AAG submission to the NSW Law Reform Commission (LRC) review of the Guardianship Act 1987

AAG's NSW Division has been working on a submission in response to the NSW LRC's review of the Guardianship Act 1987. If you would like to get involved by providing comments on AAG's draft submission, please contact Sandra South (one of AAG's Senior Policy and Research Officers) at [ssouth@aag.asn.au](mailto:ssouth@aag.asn.au) by 22 January 2018.

You can also submit your own individual response to the draft proposals (read more [here](#)).

## Stakeholder consultation on research priorities for older adults and natural hazards in Australia

You are invited to participate in a study to identify priority areas for research about ageing and natural hazards, such as flooding, storms, bushfires and heatwaves, in Australia. Because there is limited research specifically focused on older adults, particularly for hazards other than heatwaves, this study seeks to develop a set of research priorities that are relevant to stakeholders working in the fields of community services, aged care, emergency services, and disaster management, and to older adults and representative organisations.

This study consists of two phases:

- Phase 1: We ask you to identify priority research areas based on your work, experience, and knowledge. We will analyse all responses to Phase 1 to identify key topic areas.
- Phase 2: We ask you to rate each topic area in terms of its importance.

Your input into each phase should take no longer than 10 minutes. We believe this process will help ensure that future research generates information that is applicable and relevant for stakeholders.

The findings from this study will be presented firstly at a workshop held in Sydney on 14 February 2018, and will also be published. They will also be used to inform grant applications for research related to ageing and natural hazards in Australia.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please use the following link to complete the questionnaire: [https://mq.edu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_eXbHbVL28VZjA8d](https://mq.edu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eXbHbVL28VZjA8d)

**This survey closes 15 January 2018.**

You can access the ethics approval document for this study [here](#).

The study is being conducted by Dr Matalena Tofa, Dr Kat Haynes, Dr Mel Taylor, and Dr Sue Ferguson. If you have any queries, please contact Dr Matalena Tofa, Department of Geography and Planning, ph: (02) 9850 4285, email: [matalena.tofa@mq.edu.au](mailto:matalena.tofa@mq.edu.au)

## Inquiry into the Quality of Care in Residential Aged Care Facilities in Australia— Invitation to Lodge a Submission

The Australian Parliament's House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport (the Committee) will be considering issues relating Australia's residential aged care system, including the quality of care provided to residents and the adequacy of consumer protections arrangements, in its *Inquiry into the Quality of Care in Residential Aged Care Facilities in Australia*.

The Committee would like to invite submissions to its Inquiry relating to the Terms of Reference which can be found on the Inquiry's [website](#).

The preferred method of receiving submissions is by electronic format lodged [online](#) via the Committee's website using a My Parliament account. Please do not send submissions directly to the Committee's email inbox. Submissions should be received by **8 February 2018**.

Guidance on preparing a submission can be found [here](#) and in the attached brochure.

Please be aware that after a document is lodged the Committee will consider whether to accept and publish the document on its website as a submission to the Inquiry. If you would like your document to remain confidential, please ensure that you indicate this clearly by checking the relevant box. Please note that your document should not be disclosed to other persons until it has been authorised for publication by the Committee.

Should you require further information about the inquiry, please contact the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4145 or by email: [health.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:health.reps@aph.gov.au)

## Senate Inquiry into the Future of Work and Workers

On 19 October 2017 the Senate established the Select Committee on the Future of Work and Workers to inquire and report on the impact of technological and other change on the future of work and workers in Australia.

The full terms of reference for the inquiry are as follows:

*...to inquire into and report on the impact of technological and other change on the future of work and workers in Australia, with particular reference to:*

- a. the future earnings, job security, employment status and working patterns of Australians;*
- b. the different impact of that change on Australians, particularly on regional Australians, depending on their demographic and geographic characteristics;*
- c. the wider effects of that change on inequality, the economy, government and society;*
- d. the adequacy of Australia's laws, including industrial relations laws and regulations, policies and institutions to prepare Australians for that change;*
- e. international efforts to address that change; and*
- f. any related matters.*

Information regarding the inquiry can be found at the [committee's website](#). The committee is required to report by 21 June 2018.

The committee invites your organisation to make a submission to this inquiry. You are also free to circulate this invitation to any other stakeholders who may be interested in lodging a submission. **Submissions are due by 30 January 2018.**

The committee encourages the lodgement of submissions in electronic form and it is possible to lodge a submission through the [committee's website](#). Alternatively submissions can be lodged via email to [futureofwork.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:futureofwork.sen@aph.gov.au). All submissions should include the author's full name, phone number and postal address on a separate covering letter.

## Consultation: LGBTI Action Plan for Aged Care

The Government is developing an LGBTI Action Plan as part of a new [Aged Care Diversity Framework](#). This plan is **critically important** and will inform the Government about the particular needs of LGBTI communities in Australia.

The National LGBTI Health Alliance is holding [in-person consultations across Australia](#) in November and December 2017 and [conducting an online survey](#) to ensure your experiences and wisdom are included. They need everyone to contribute their voices to ensure the best possible future for LGBTI aged care in Australia.

**Contact** [samantha.edmonds@lgbtihealth.org.au](mailto:samantha.edmonds@lgbtihealth.org.au) for more information

## Consultation: Specialist Dementia Care Units

In 2016, the Australian Government [announced](#) it would establish Specialist Dementia Care Units (SDCUs) to support people who experience very severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD).

The Department of Health welcomes your feedback on the proposed high-level design of SDCUs.

A detailed consultation paper has just been published. The consultation period will close on **21 January 2018**.

For more information and to participate, please visit the Department of Health's [Consultation Hub](#).

## COTA Australia needs your help - measuring quality and consumer choice in aged care

COTA Australia is asking Australians their views about the quality of life and quality of care in aged care services as part of a project to better understand the information consumers want to choose their aged care providers.

People wishing to participate in the focus groups for either consumers or providers can find details and RSVP information here: <http://www.cota.org.au/australia/requests/measuring-quality-and-consumer-choice-in-aged-care.aspx>

- To participate in the online survey **before 31 December 2017**:  
Older Australians, their families, friends and supporters can fill in their consumer survey here:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Choicesinagedcareconsumers>
- Aged Care providers and industry representatives can visit here:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ChoicesAgedCareServices>

Should you have any questions about this project, please don't hesitate to email COTA at [reform@cota.org.au](mailto:reform@cota.org.au) or get in touch with Jude Harris, Senior Policy Officer at COTA on 03 9909 7916.

## The Canberra community is invited to have its say on the establishment of the new Office for Mental Health

The ACT Government is establishing a new Office for Mental Health. The key objectives of developing the Office for Mental Health are to:

- provide comprehensive oversight and increased understanding of the mental health system and how it could be improved in the ACT;
- ensure person-centred and needs-based approaches across government initiatives;
- improve the coordination, integration and targeting of services and facilities; and
- drive a reduction in mental illness incidence, frequency and impact through the development and oversight of a comprehensive Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework.

In recognising the importance of establishing the Office for Mental Health to support the needs of those with lived experience of mental health issues and mental illness, their carers, service providers and the broader community, the ACT Government is seeking genuine and transparent engagement with all stakeholders. As part of this process, [an online survey](#) has also been developed, which is **available until the 8th of February 2018**.

## Reports and other resources

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- The Federal Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health, Ken Wyatt AM, MP [launched](#) the Aged Care Diversity Framework on 6 December 2017. The Framework's six priority areas are:
  - Making informed choices
  - Adopting systemic approaches to planning and implementation
  - Accessible care and support
  - Supporting a proactive and flexible system
  - Respectful and inclusive services
  - Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable

The Aged Care Diversity Framework can be downloaded [here on the Department of Health's website](#). The tools and resources that support the framework can be found [here](#). You can read more on the [Department of Health's Ageing and Aged Care website "People from diverse backgrounds"](#).

- The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) Strategic Plan: VCAT for the future 2018-2022, was launched by Victorian Attorney-General, Martin Pakula on Tuesday 5 December 2017. Tens of thousands of people turn to VCAT each year to resolve legal disputes and human rights issues – the tribunal receives more than 86,000 applications a year. To find out more about **VCAT for the future 2018-2022**, download a [PDF](#) or [accessible version](#) of the plan.
- The Department of Health has now released the second Home Care Packages data report on the operation of the new arrangements for home care. The report includes data from 1 July to 30 September 2017. The report presents data across four key categories:
  - eligibility and assessment of home care consumers
  - the national prioritisation process (including the number of packages assigned and the number of people on the national queue)
  - service delivery (demand and supply for home care across aged care planning regions)
  - provider behaviour on maximum exit amounts published on the My Aged Care service finder.

The report provides useful information to help manage your business in the new market-based environment. It is available from the new [AIHW GEN aged care data website](#).

- The second edition of the [National Safety and Quality Health Service \(NSQHS\) Standards](#) which was endorsed by Health Ministers in July 2017 is now available. Since the implementation of the first edition in 2013, health service organisations have used the NSQHS Standards to put in place strategies that have been demonstrated to improve patient care.

The second edition of the NSQHS Standards addresses gaps identified in the first edition, including mental health and cognitive impairment, health literacy, end-of-life care, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. It also updates the evidence for actions, consolidates and streamlines standards and actions to make them clearer and easier to implement.

The Commission has developed a range of other resources to support implementation of the NSQHS Standards. [These are available here](#). Health service organisations will be assessed to the second edition of the NSQHS Standards from January 2019. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care will provide information on the transition arrangements for assessment well in advance of implementation. For more information on the second edition and related resources please contact the National Standards team on 1800 304 056 or [accreditation@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:accreditation@safetyandquality.gov.au)

- The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care's [National Model Clinical Governance Framework is also available now](#). Leaders of health service organisations have a responsibility to the community for ensuring that their services are person-centred, safe and effective. Building on the NSQHS Standards, the Framework provides information about corporate and clinical governance, and roles and responsibilities for people within a health service organisation.

- The [Short-Term Restorative Care \(STRC\) Programme Manual](#) has been updated. The manual provides guidance for providers delivering STRC services.

Changes made to the manual include:

- the claim for payment process
- the provision of Modified Barthel Index tests
- client leave provisions
- rules governing the acceptance, rejection and termination of care
- the provision of financial information to clients.

[More information about STRC programme.](#)

A consumer booklet for the Short-Term Restorative Care (STRC) Programme is now available. The [‘Your guide to short-term restorative care’ booklet](#) is for older Australians, their families and carers to guide them through the process of accessing STRC.

- The Australian Government has [launched](#) a new, free nationwide support network to stand up for the rights of older Australians. Aged Care Minister Ken Wyatt AM said the Older Persons Advocacy Network would immediately provide strong local voices for individuals in need. “Through OPAN’s network of nine service delivery organisations – one in each state and the ACT and two in the Northern Territory, in Darwin and Alice Springs – we are now providing a nationally consistent model of independent advocacy. You can [view the OPAN website here](#).

## Carers

- ACT Carers Strategy Statement and Carers Voice Panel Report has been [launched](#). In October this year, 49 carers and members of the broader community took part in a deliberative democracy process that will lead to a 10-year ACT Carers Strategy. The report on the panel can be found [here](#).

## Health

- On 29 March 2017, the Senate agreed that on 1 June 2017 it would refer the following matter to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee for inquiry and report on [the value and affordability of private health insurance and out-of-pocket medical costs](#). The [final report](#) was tabled on 19 December 2017.
- The Chief Executive Officer of NHMRC has approved an amendment to the [Clinical guidelines for stroke management 2017](#) as undertaken by the Stroke Foundation under section 14A of the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (the NHMRC Act). Read more about the amendments [here](#).

## Housing and the Built Environment

- The [November 2017 Release of the Rental Affordability Index](#) is now available. National Shelter, Community Sector Banking and SGS have released the Rental Affordability Index (RAI) on a biannual basis since 2015. A price index for rental housing markets, the RAI is an easy to understand indicator of rental affordability relative to household incomes. It is applied to geographic areas across Australia.

## Mental health

- The NSW Government has [released](#) the independent Review of seclusion, restraint and observation of consumers with a mental illness in NSW Health facilities by the state’s Chief Psychiatrist, Dr Murray Wright, and a panel of five mental health experts. The full report can be found [here](#).
- The NSW Minister for Mental Health and Minister for Ageing Tanya Davies [announced](#) an additional 17,000 care hours, as part of a \$2.4 million boost for Older Persons Mental Health (OPMH) services. The funding boost will enable the recruitment of 15 new fulltime mental health clinicians across the state, including one in South Western Sydney Local Health District.

## Regional, Rural and Remote

- The Minister for Aged Care, Ken Wyatt AM, [announced](#) that 18 services in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia will receive additional funding under the Flexible Aged Care Places Allocations Round for Multi-Purpose Services (MPS).
- The NSW Minister for Health Brad Hazzard [announced](#) that nine rural and regional areas in NSW will soon have new palliative care specialists as part of a \$3.06 million investment to improve the care and choices for patients.

## Appointments

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- The Minister for Aged Care, Ken Wyatt AM, [announced](#) the appointment of Mike Callaghan, AM PSM, as the new Chair of the Aged Care Financing Authority (ACFA). This independent statutory committee has an essential role in providing advice to the Government on funding and financing issues affecting the aged care sector.

## Government funding

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### GrantConnect - Australian Government's grants information system

#### What is GrantConnect?

- GrantConnect provides a central location for potential grant applicants to find and access Grant Opportunities and documentation on Commonwealth grant schemes. Anyone can sign up to receive optional email notification of new Commonwealth Grant Opportunities, relevant to their interests, as they are published.
- GrantConnect is part of the whole-of-government grant reform agenda led by the Department of Finance.

#### Why is GrantConnect being implemented?

- To make it easier to identify for Commonwealth Grant Opportunities relevant to your interests.
- GrantConnect is part of the grant reform agenda which also includes updating and streamlining Grant Opportunity Guidelines (NHMRC Funding Rules).

#### How does it impact me?

- From 30 April 2017, Commonwealth Grant Opportunities and their associated guidelines must be published on GrantConnect.
- To access Grant Opportunity Guidelines and to receive optional email notifications, users will need to create a GrantConnect account.
- GrantConnect is 'live' now at [www.grants.gov.au](http://www.grants.gov.au)
- Grant Opportunity Guidelines will no longer be published on the NHMRC website for Grant Opportunities opening after 30 April 2017.

The GrantConnect Helpdesk (run by Department of Finance) can be reached on 1300 484 145 (between 9am and 5pm ACT Local Time, Monday to Friday, excluding ACT and national public holidays) or via email - [GrantConnect@finance.gov.au](mailto:GrantConnect@finance.gov.au). Watch the GrantConnect video [here](#).