

INDUSTRY UPDATE – MARCH

APR 11TH, 2018 | [ARTICLE](#)

We are now well into 2018, and it has been another busy month for the Industry. This month we touch on revenue streams, respite investigation, palliative care recommendations, some legislation enactments and much more from the month of March.

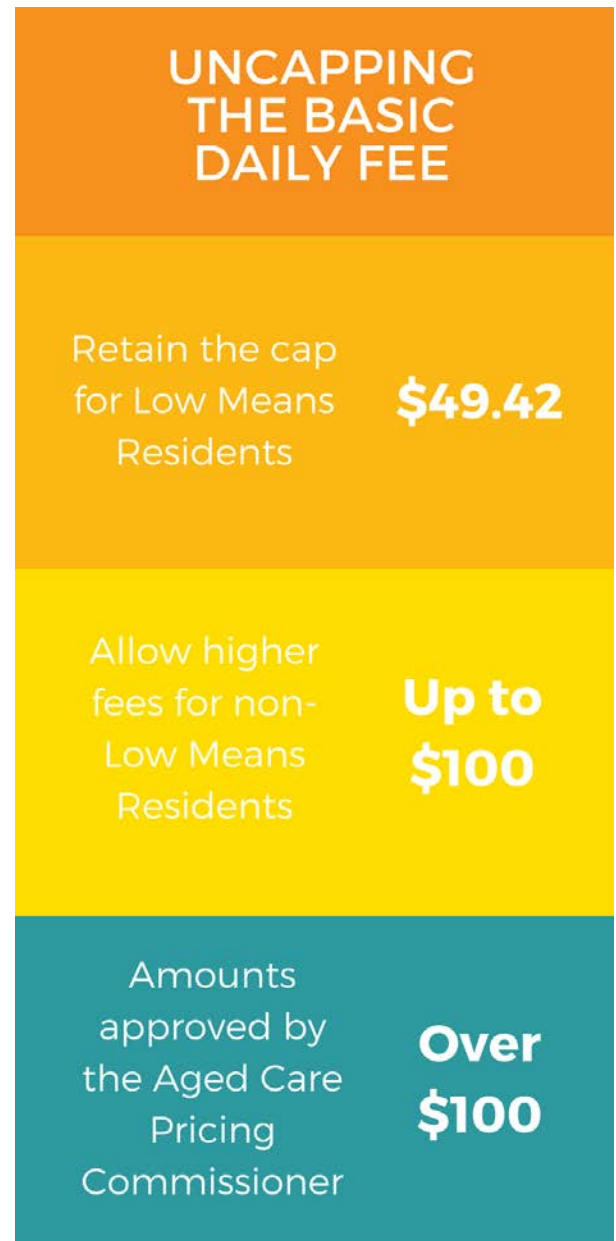
‘ASSET REPLACEMENT’ FEES RULED AGAINST IN FEDERAL COURT CASE

Asset replacement charges! We've already written an article about this ([which you can find here](#)) but we thought it was worth revisiting.

In case you missed it, the Federal Court made a ruling this month on the legality of asset replacement charges. These have now been disallowed and as a result several Aged Care Providers have had to refund these fees over the last few years to their residents. This has again brought up the conversation surrounding financial sustainability – how can we as an industry continue to be sustainable?

One suggestion that was in the Tune Review (Aged Care Legislated Review) that is getting a bit of air time is the uncapping of the Basic Daily Fee. We've summarised the main recommendations in the infographic to the right! Basically this would allow Aged Care Providers to levy higher Basic Daily Fees to their Residents (where they are not considered financially disadvantaged Residents).

[You can read more about that suggestion here.](#)



Source: Aged Care Legislated Review

INVESTIGATION INTO RESPITE

A review into respite services in Australia is going to take place following the Tune Review (<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/legislated-review-of-aged-care-2017-report>) which recommended many changes, including a few to do with respite.

Recommendation 8 from the Report recommended that the Government:

1. Review the existing respite arrangements to ensure it is achieving its desired outcomes and;
2. Discontinue the ACAR for residential care (including respite beds) and review how to ensure supply is adequate and that people have equitable access to respite when they need it.

In response, Minister for Aged Care Ken Wyatt commissioned a review of the respite system which he has tasked to the [Aged Care Financing Authority \(ACFA\)](#). The purpose is to review whether the current arrangements meet the needs of all stakeholders, with feedback and consultation from the community invited. To read further on the recommendations and the review, see the [Aged Care Guide's article here](#) and the [Australian Ageing Agenda's article here](#).

UNANNOUNCED ACCREDITATION AUDITS LEGISLATED

The unannounced accreditation audits reform has been enacted on the 16th March by the “unannounced reaccreditation audits” amendment under the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency Act 2013. The Minister for Aged Care Ken Wyatt marked this change in October 2017 on release of the Carnell-Paterson review of quality regulation (that had recommended the change). The reform will apply to all residential care services applying for re-accreditation from 1 July 2018 with an accreditation expiring on or after 1 January 2019.

It will not apply to providers who have already been given notice of their re-accreditation audit date or to services whose accreditation expires before 1 January 2019. You can [find out more here](#) and at the [Department's page here](#), or view the amendment [here](#).

HOMELESSNESS ON THE RISE FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS

Homelessness is on the rise, and Older Australians are a part of those whose rates of homelessness are steadily increasing. The [2016 Census of Population and Housing](#) was released on the 14th March, and continued to show the increase of homelessness of persons over the age of 55 over the past 3 Census (from 2006

onwards). The additional risks for older Australians include unaffordable housing when relying on a pension, reduced earning capacity and physical or cognitive changes.

Mission Australia identified that homelessness for older Australians was a growing concern in late 2017. You can [read their report here](#).

To read more about how our industry makes a huge impact on the lives of Older Australians, view [our first ever Impact Report](#).

PALLIATIVE CARE KEY FEATURE IN REFORMS TO HUMAN SERVICES REPORT

On the 26th March, a report released by the Productivity Commission gave an insight and recommendations to drastically improve palliative care services (at home, hospitals and Aged Care facilities in Australia). The Productivity Commission report, originally released to the Government in October 2017, highlights that many older Australians do not have their choices or needs met when in palliative care. You can [view the full report and recommendations here](#).

DISTRESSING NEWS ON QUALITY OF CARE IN AGED CARE HOMES

With the distressing news of the Oakden Nursing Home scandal, coupled with the investigation of suspicious deaths at a Queensland facility, it has been a time of change on the question of quality in Aged Care. More concerns have been raised about a further 16 South Australian Aged Care homes and the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency has been accused of failing to detect or act on appalling abuse.

The South Australian government accepted all 13 recommendations from the Oakden ICAC report, and added plans to implement CCTV cameras in Aged Care homes, and create a dedicated unit to investigate unresolved allegations of abuse.

In Queensland, there have been accusations of Aged Care facilities unnecessarily referring Care Recipients to hospitals, avoiding having to provide care by skilled nursing staff within their facilities. This has highlighted the issue of Aged Care Providers meeting their requirements to provide adequate numbers of suitably skilled staff, based on care requirements; currently set by Aged Care facilities themselves. To read more about these, click on the links below.

[South Australian Government accepts 13 recommendations](#)

[16 South Australian facilities fail to meet standards](#)

[Queensland Aged Care homes accused of leaving sickly residents at hospitals](#)

NEW REPORT RELEASED ON SUICIDE IN AGED CARE

A [new study](#) that has been released into suicide in Aged Care has discovered that 140 Residents living in Aged Care facilities in Australia have taken their own lives between 2000 and 2013. The study, one of the largest investigations of this topic ever undertaken and published in the International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, shows that 66% of these Residents had a depression diagnosis, and nearly 80% were facing major life stresses (health deterioration named as one such stress). [The report](#) highlights the need for change in prevention practices and what changes can be made from a national policy level, Aged Care facilities and families and friends.

AMANA LIVING ARTS FESTIVAL ENRICHING THE LIVES OF OLDER AUSTRALIANS

With the intention of encouraging and improving the social lives, and of course the well-being of residents, the Amana Living Arts Festival was a 6-week event that began on the 12th February and only recently concluded on the 25th March. The festival was a part of an enrichment program for Residents, involved more than 150 events at over 50 locations in Western Australia, and included sessions on various artists of many different mediums, such as musicians, dancers and sculptors. For more information on this wonderful annual event, check out these articles [here](#) and [here](#).

That's all for this month but check back in with us next month for another Industry update!



THE PROVIDER ASSIST TEAM
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See more at <https://providerassist.com.au/news-resources/industry-update-march>