

# INDUSTRY UPDATE – MAY

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The month of May was budget month, making it an extremely busy time in the industry, with many conversations arising from the budget release. There were many opinions on what the budget meant for both Home Care and Residential Aged Care, with a number of initiatives well-received, but also many areas that generated much discussion about what was absent. Once again, quality was a focus-point this month with the new quality framework bill entering Parliament, as is the topic of the Aged Care workforce and the workforce strategy taskforce. Cyber security and privacy increased in importance as an issue for Aged Care in Australia, the 2018-19 ACAR round opens for consultation and an exciting pilot begins to help avoid hospital admissions. Check out our summary of the busy month that was in the industry!

## 2018-19 FEDERAL BUDGET

The National Budget was released on the 8th May, with a focus on healthy ageing and Aged Care featuring prominently. The budget contained some of the recommendations from the Tune Review, and while many initiatives that the budget included were well-received, there was a great deal of conversation surrounding what was absent. These are significant areas; such as the addition of 14,000 high level Home Care packages not making much of a dent to the 56,850 people currently waiting for one; the absence of the topic of staffing (although the Government is currently undertaking a workforce reform review in consultation with the industry); and of course, the need to address the sustainability and growing needs of the industry.

You can read [Provider Assist's breakdown of the budget here](#), the [Government's release here](#) and [ACSA's wrap up here](#).

## NEW QUALITY FRAMEWORKS

With the new quality standards set to be implemented on 1st July 2018, Minister for Aged Care Ken Wyatt introduced the Aged Care (Single Quality Framework) Reform Bill 2018 to Parliament on the 24th May. The single set of quality standards will apply to Residential Aged Care, Home Care, Aboriginal flexible care and transition care programs, replacing the four sets of standards currently in existence. [The single set of standards is expected to complement](#) the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, who will be responsible for enforcing the standards. You can read the draft Aged Care Quality Standards [here](#).

## CONSULTATION FOR RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE PLACES

From 15th May to 28th May 2018, a [national consultation process](#) opened to identify where residential Aged Care places are most needed for the 2018-19 Aged Care Approvals Round

(ACAR). With 13,500 new residential Aged Care places announced in the budget, 775 short term restorative care places and \$60 million in capital grants, the consultation aimed to ensure the distribution of the new places is where they are needed most. The responses are now being considered, and it has been announced that the [2018-19 ACAR will open on the 2nd July 2018](#).

## HELPING RESIDENTS AVOID THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

[Recent reports in the media](#) have accused Aged Care facilities of 'dumping' Residents in hospitals, suggesting that sending them to hospital for care means avoiding hiring additional nursing and care staff. With a hospital visit potentially leading to stress and trauma, [a pilot program is currently running in Queensland](#), to help keep Residents out of the hospital if they can, prescribing a management plan if possible. The Senior Early Assessment Team (SEAT) program is based on email and video-conferencing systems, and allows Doctors and Nurses to observe Residents using a tablet. The idea is to reduce stress on the Resident, ensuring they are receiving the very best of care at the same time as well as the flow on effect of freeing up Doctors and Nurses in hospitals. The pilot concludes in June, with other Queensland based facilities interested in rolling out the program. A [similar research project is also currently being undertaken in Melbourne](#) by the Melbourne Ageing Research Collaboration (MARC), focusing on Residents living with dementia who are more likely to be admitted to hospital. The aim of the project is to identify why people with dementia are more likely to be admitted to hospital, and what resources can be provided to carers to support making decisions about health care needs. You can read further on the research [here](#).

## CYBER SECURITY

There has been a lot in the media recently about cyber security, and in particular cyber security in the Health Care Industry. Storing a great deal of personal and sensitive data, facilities and organisations are at great risk of a cyber attack or a breach of privacy. The Office of the Australian Information Commission (OAIC) released their [first quarterly statistics report](#), which showed that the Health Care Industry recorded the largest percentage – 24% – of data breaches. To read more on the concerns of the sector about cyber security and the actions you can take to build cyber resilience, [click here](#).

## CONSUMERS ABLE TO RATE AND COMPARE AGED CARE

A new online comparison platform for Aged Care services has launched its pilot. The system will enable consumers to rate, compare and receive quotes from Aged Care Providers. Allowing consumers to read reviews and recommendations in turn encourages accountability and operational improvements. You can read further details on the feature, which is an addition to the Aged Care Guide's website, [here](#) and [here](#).

## WORKFORCE SUMMIT

The Aged Care workforce continues to be a strong topic of conversation in the industry. [A report released by HESTA](#) after a two year research project raised concerns about the dwindling number of workers in the industry; while the release of the 18-19 budget did comment on staffing in the industry, which was [remarked on as a notable absence](#). The Government is currently undertaking an [Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce](#), with efforts focused on changing the way that the Aged Care workforce thinks about ageing and Aged Care. This process has included a [commitment to address the additional challenges](#) presented to Aged Care providers in remotes locations. In early May, the second national workforce summit took place where 15 strategic actions were presented to stakeholders. The taskforce is scheduled to report to the Minister by the 30th of June 2018. For more information, [click here](#).

## TAX PRACTICES INQUIRY

The Senate Economics Reference Committee will [examine for-profit Aged Care organisations in an inquiry](#) into their use of strategies to avoid or reduce tax. A number of larger for-profit organisations have been found to be minimising tax, which was released in a report by the Tax Justice Network, commissioned by the Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation, titled Tax Avoidance by For-Profit Aged Care Companies: Profit Shifting on Public Funds. A report will be submitted by 14 August 2018.

## MOTHER'S DAY

With Mother's Day in early May, a South East Queensland facility had their Residents share their feelings about their Mums. You can watch the beautiful video [here](#) (and prepare your tissues!)

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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