

INDUSTRY UPDATE – JULY

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The new financial year has begun and the second half of the year is in full swing. This month in the industry has seen some big changes with the My Aged Care overhaul and the controversial opt-out period beginning for My Health Record. Calls for the Government to review funding and its sustainability (or lack thereof) continue and the number of future Aged Care facilities going up (yes, we are talking skyscrapers!) rises as Aged Care building projects are announced. A drop in the number of GPs visiting Aged Care facilities is being reported whilst the emergency department program Geriatric Emergency Department Intervention (GEDI) gains praise and traction. The election in South Australia sees a promise for changes with Staffing Ratios, and of course this month sees new calls for screening Aged Care workers with the infamous advert for the Senior Sitter hitting the news – here is the July industry wrap!

SENIOR SITTER ADVERT

[An advert placed in a Gold Coast newsletter](#) in July has sparked a conversation about the lack of a system to screen freelance workers in the Aged Care sector. Solicitor Christine Smyth, who specialises in laws affecting the elderly has spoken out about the advert, and is calling for a 'blue card' system to monitor and vet freelancers. The suggested systems would be similar to the way childcare workers and anyone working with children and young people are required to complete a Working with Children Check. Whilst Government funded Aged Care facilities and Home Care services require all workers to have Police and background checks performed, freelancers who offer services that could mean entering people's homes are not currently obliged to be screened. The Government currently has no plans for a blue card system to be established, although there have been calls for a [national register of Aged Care workers](#).

ACAR OPENS

The [2018-19 ACAR](#) officially opened on the 2nd July 2018. With 13,500 residential care places and 775 short-term restorative care places, plus \$60 million in capital grants, the focus will be on meeting the needs of older people living in rural, regional and remote areas. Applications for the 2018-19 ACAR close on the 10th August 2018. Nominal allocation of places by state can be found [here](#).

DEMENTIA NETWORK AND GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT

This month the Government launched [ADnet](#), the Australian Dementia Network, with a Government investment of \$18 million. [ADnet is a registry and research program](#) with the aim of preventing and better managing dementia, and of course

research for a cure. ADnet's work will be boosted by an additional \$20 million from state governments, universities and philanthropists.

[Another forward step for dementia this month](#) is a new program funded by the Department of Social Services Aged Care Services Improvement and Healthy Ageing Grants Program, and developed by Dementia Australia. The Insights into the Hospital Dementia Experience toolkit has been developed to help hospital staff gain a new perspective on their patients who are living with dementia. Aimed at increasing understanding of how a person living with dementia may experience a hospital visit, the empathy training is for those people who would care for them during this time, such a hospital staff. You can view more on the toolkit [here](#).

SKYSCRAPER AGED CARE

Aged Care facilities look to rise – literally – with a [10-storey building](#) that includes Aged Care accommodation and retiree apartments set to be built in Adelaide; and a [12-storey tower](#) proposed in Brisbane with residential care facilities and the purpose of an 'ageing in place solution'. An [18-storey residential retirement home](#) by Australian Unity is another tall project set for South Melbourne in 2019, which will sit next door to an Australian Unity assisted living and Aged Care facility.

UNANNOUNCED AUDITS & AGED CARE QUALITY

With the news that a facility has failed 43 out of the 44 quality standards, and the introduction of unannounced audits (for all facilities applying for re-accreditation from 1 July 2018 or with an accreditation expiry date on, or after, 1 January 2019), quality is again at the forefront of industry conversation. Minister Ken Wyatt has marked the move to unannounced audits as the start of a [new era for quality in Aged Care](#). [Unannounced re-accreditation audits](#) began from July 1, and the new Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will begin on 1st January 2019. The 1st July 2018 also marked the beginning of the 12 month transition period for the new quality standards, with formal assessment against them to start in 2019.

DOCTORS CUTTING BACK AGED CARE VISITS

A recent survey conducted by the Australian Medical Association (AMA) has shown that [one third of Doctors plan to reduce their visits to Aged Care facilities](#) or even cease them completely over the next two years. The reasons reported are inadequate Medicare rebates for visiting, when visits are more frequent and Doctors are having to stay longer. The AMA has also called for a minimum number of Registered Nurses that are able to deal with the needs of Residents and give appropriate clinical handovers if required. You can read the AMA's Aged Care Survey Report [here](#).

THE GERIATRIC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT INTERVENTION (GEDI) PROGRAM

A new program has been rolled out in parts of Queensland, [designed to improve emergency care for people over 70 years of age](#). A successful pilot of the Geriatric Emergency Department Intervention (GEDI) program showed that the nurse-led model improved patient experiences and outcomes. The program consists of an intervention team, with a clinical nurse consultant, an emergency department physician and clinical nurses, who work on the assessment and care of older people. You can read more on the program [here](#) and [here](#).

VOWED LEGISLATION FOR STAFFING RATIOS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Rebekha Sharkie, candidate for the Mayo electorate in South Australia, [had vowed to have facilities publish full details on their staffing ratios](#) under legislation prior to winning the by-election on July 28th. After her win, Ms Sharkie has a few first points of order, one of which would be [to start drafting a Bill](#) for the transparency of staffing ratios in the industry. With one in five residents in Mayo over the age of 65, Ms Sharkie is also working with co-workers on improving the training qualifications of personal care workers in the industry.

CONTINUED FOCUS ON FUNDING ISSUES

The three Aged Care peaks have continued to [call for focus on Aged Care funding](#), joining together to highlight the funding issues faced in the industry. With five Federal by-elections held in late July, Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA), Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) and The Aged Care Guild issued a joint paper to encourage political candidates to prioritise a sustainable system. You can read the key issues paper [here](#). The paper comes with the peak bodies [voicing their concerns of the inadequacy of the Aged Care Funding Instrument indexation increase](#), and its inability to properly fund the industry.

MY AGED CARE OVERHAUL

The My Aged Care overhaul revealed in the 2018-19 budget will have more than [\\$85 million injected](#) into it to simplify and streamline the process, to allow for greater access and more choice. The plans to improve the portal, including a consumer-oriented comparison system, have been [welcomed by Aged and Community Services Australia \(ACSA\)](#). In addition to the consumer-facing improvements, a new system allowing doctors to send referrals from their own systems directly to My Aged Care is planned to be ready by June 2019. You can read further on the referral system [here](#).

MY HEALTH RECORD

July was the start of the much talked about opt-out period of the Government's [My Health Record](#). The robust debate surrounding the My Health Record has included how it could [positively affect those people navigating Home or Residential Aged Care, and the hospital system](#). Partnering with the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA), ACSA Chief Executive Officer Pat Sparrow has shared the [beneficial aspects for older Australians](#), including the empowering nature of being able to share records in a streamlined manner to assist in things such as advance care planning. [LASA has also partnered with the ADHA](#) to help provide information to LASA stakeholders and members, and has also voiced support for the benefits My Health Record can have for older Australians.

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

See more at: <https://providerassist.com.au/news-resources/>



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