

INDUSTRY UPDATE – AUGUST

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August was a month of politics: a new Prime Minister, a new bill introduced and a new study added to the RUCS. Home Care was a huge focus this month, the concern about the lack of funds and rising needs of Home Care places becoming a larger and larger issue. The boost of funding to Mental Health in Aged Care sees a number of programs and studies coming together and Elderly Abuse awareness also benefits from a funding injection. To top off the month a number of awards were held celebrating the achievements of some of our most brilliant workers in the industry. Here is your industry update for the month of August!

A NEW PRIME MINISTER & WHAT IT MEANS FOR AGED CARE

August brought with it a new Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, however the new ministry retained Ken Wyatt as Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care (adding 'Senior Australians' to his title), and Greg Hunt as Minister for Health. The reappointment of the Ministers [was welcomed by peak body Aged & Community Services Australia \(ACSA\)](#), who highlighted that they would be able to continue working closely with the Ministers as they have been. Peak body Leading Aged Services Australia (LASA) have [expressed disappointment](#) that the new Prime Minister did not raise the aged care portfolio to the inner ministry. However, the peaks were pleased that PM Scott Morrison recognised the importance and challenges that face the Aged Care industry. Labour has called for a bipartisan in order to establish long term reform to the industry. [A bipartisan](#) is exactly what the late Professor Hal Kendig, an expert on ageing policy, said was required to make real change in his final public article.

RUCS UPDATE

Early findings in the [Resource Utilisation and Classification Study](#) have been revealed, supporting the view that [Aged Care costs are propelled by the burden of care](#). The preliminary findings from Study One of the RUCS were presented by The Australian Health Services Research Institute (AHSRI) who have been commissioned to undertake the study. The RUCS will now include a fourth study in addition to the original three. This Supplementary Reassessment Study, which will begin in September 2018, will reassess a portion of Residents who were assessed in Study One, to evaluate changes in conditions. You can find the presentations of results shared by AHSRI on the [RUCS webpage here](#). You can also view our breakdown of the myths and facts surrounding the potential changes to ACFI on our [website](#).

2018 ACFA ANNUAL REPORT

The latest [Aged Care Financing Authority \(ACFA\) Report](#) was presented on the 31st July, scrutinising “developments, issues and challenges” that the Aged Care industry faces. The Australian Ageing Agenda reveals that the report has shown an [interesting](#)

[change in preference for accommodation payment choices](#). Based on 2016-2017 data, ACFA have stated they are monitoring the changes but noted they are not significant. The Home Care statistics revealed in the report have generated a lot of interest, with \$329M worth of unspent funds sparking calls for policy review. You can read LASA's breakdown of the key Home Care related statistics [here](#).

HOME CARE

Home Care has been an enormous topic in the media this past month. With the report of [record numbers](#) of older Australians receiving Home Care, the new figures released in August show that those [still waiting for Home Care packages has reached more than 108,000](#). With only 24,000 packages left to be released in this financial year, the shadow Minister for Ageing and Mental Health, Julie Collins, has [expressed concern in a statement](#) that the Government is not going to be able to keep up with the demand. The Government's Home Care Packages Program report can be read [here](#).

Meanwhile, [a new program is being piloted](#) by the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency (AACQA) that will allow consumers to compare Home Care Providers; and an iSelect Co-founder is launching [a new Home and Aged Care model](#) to provide free advice on a select number of Home Care providers and a flat fee for advice on Aged Care facilities.

MP REBEKAH SHARKIE INTRODUCES BILL ON STAFFING RATIOS

As reported in our [July 2018 Industry Update](#), Centre Alliance MP Rebekah Sharkie has introduced a bill calling for Aged Care facilities to be required to reveal their staffing ratios. MP Rebekah Sharkie promised to introduce the bill if she won the seat of Mayo in South Australia, and has moved ahead with her promise. The Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio Disclosure) Bill 2018 intends for approved Aged Care Providers to be required to publish staffing ratios quarterly, in order to create greater transparency. You can [read the proposed bill here](#) and the Aged Care Guide's [breakdown of the bill here](#).

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Technology in the Aged Care sector is, as always, uncovering exciting and valuable tools to assist the industry. This month we've seen:

- A [monitoring program in development](#) that is designed to monitor health and wellbeing in Residents through non-invasive sensors, to alert care staff if there is a potential issue;
- ['Smart Buildings'](#) that could switch on lights for arthritis sufferers, make noises for those who are sight or cognitively impaired, or have voice activated controls and alert carers to risk factors;

- [Digital assistance programs](#) helping older people learn and connect with technologies.

PRIVACY BREACH

The NSW Health Minister has apologised after a [huge breach of privacy was uncovered](#) at a former Aged Care Facility site, where more than 1000 sensitive records were found on the floor of a room. An investigation is currently underway to understand why the breach occurred.

AGED CARE INNOVATION & INITIATIVES

As with technology this month, we've have some exciting developments in innovation for the industry. A [Government radio project](#) to assist culturally diverse older people has been launched, with the goal of providing access to Aged Care information. The project, called Speak My Language, will involve 160 bilingual Aged Care facilitators and ethnic radio programs, as well as online resources.

The University of South Australia is also setting its sights on innovation in the industry, planning to [turn one of its campuses into an Aged Care Facility](#), where training and innovation in practice will take place in conjunction with an Aged Care Provider.

Another South Australian innovator, Premier Health Care, is looking to offer housing to spouses, whose partners have entered Aged Care. The expansion of their site means that partners would be able to live in the same facility, meaning one of the most difficult parts of moving a loved one into care can be eased. You can read more on the project [here](#).

And innovAGEING has [partnered with two very big companies](#) in August, with The Commonwealth Bank of Australia and KPMG joining as Foundation Partners.

RURAL & REMOTE

The funding announced in the 2018-19 budget for multi-purpose services in rural and remote areas has [opened up new flexible aged care places](#). Multi-purpose services in rural and remote locations are encouraged to apply in a bid to improve services for people living in these areas. The [Multi-Purpose Services Program Funding Round](#) applications close 5th October 2018.

MENTAL HEALTH BOOST FOR AGED CARE

The \$82.5M over four years committed by the Government to mental health for people living in Residential Aged Care is set to start battling the rates of depression

and anxiety. [Seven new projects](#) that all target reducing depression, anxiety and suicide amongst older people have been announced. The projects include [The National Ageing Research Institute's research project](#) investigating the impact of friendship on mental health; [Swinburne University's ELATE program](#) (Elders at Ease); and [Newcastle University's development of a web-based platform](#) to help intervene and reduce symptoms of depression in older Australians living in rural areas.

ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION FUNDING INJECTION

[\\$2 million](#) is set to boost the fight against elder abuse, the Government announced in August. The national elder abuse prevention service Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN), will be utilising the funding to [trial advocacy and prevention through information and education services](#).

Elder abuse has continued to be at the forefront of media, with an [anonymous whistleblower](#) stating that people are too afraid to come forward when they see abuse take place in the system; and [research by Monash University](#) that saw a lack of understanding or conceptualisation about elder abuse.

DEMENTIA

While September marks [Dementia Awareness month](#), in August we saw new funding for programs [focusing on innovative technologies](#). The funding allocated to dementia in the 2018-19 budget will be invested in pilot projects that have a focus on technology and innovation to improve care. One such exciting pilot is at Fresh Hope Care, partnering with I'm Soul Inc and Western Sydney University, [aims to engage dementia residents](#) through making music.

August also saw [Dementia Australia joining forces with 22 other world leading dementia organisations as a part of an international awareness campaign](#), #Every3Seconds. #Every3Seconds is a reference to the shocking statistic of the frequency that someone in the world is developing dementia.

AGED CARE AWARDS

August was a month of Awards and celebration for our beautiful industry! [ACSA](#) and [HESTA](#) held their Annual awards, recognising standout, exceptional work from both individuals and organisations alike. The [2018 Australian Aged Care Quality Agency Better Practice Awards](#) also announced their winners with outstanding leaders in innovation highlighted and congratulated. The [2018 Meaningful Ageing Australia Awards](#) have also recently announced their finalists for their awards to take place on the 19th September. Congratulations to all the winners and all the Remarkable people working in our industry.

CELEBRATING AGED CARE EMPLOYEES

The Whiddon Group have launched a new national day celebrating Aged Care employees, falling on 7th August. The day is set as an official day to “thank, honour, recognise and celebrate” Aged Care workers across Australia. Check out the [official webpage here](#) and start planning your celebrations for 2019!

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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