

INDUSTRY UPDATE – NOVEMBER

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The industry has been buzzing with Royal Commission news in November! After the release of the Terms of Reference in October, the first requests for information have been the next key topic in the news, along with how Providers need to prepare. The Affiliate Agreements, signed by peak and advocacy bodies was established; and a new Bill introduced which would require facilities to have compulsory CCTV cameras installed in Resident rooms. The Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission Bill was passed in senate, and a number of exciting innovations, technological inventions and upcoming research was reported on. What a month it was for November – let's dive right in!

ROYAL COMMISSION UPDATE: FIRST REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The Aged Care Royal Commission is, of course, at the forefront of everyone's mind. This month, the [first requests for information](#) went out, asking Australia's top 100 Aged Care Providers to self-report on their operations. [Announced at the Information and Technology in Aged Care \(ITAC\) conference](#), held on the 21-22nd November, it was revealed that all Aged Care Providers will receive written requests to supply information that will be used in the hearings in February 2019. The largest 100 Providers will need to respond by the due date of January 7th, and all other Providers will need to respond by a date – which is yet to be announced – in February. It was noted this month that the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner has received a [30% increase in calls](#) since the Royal Commission was announced in September.

The written requests are reportedly an 'invitation' for Providers to provide an early submission of information for the Royal Commission, focussing on eight primary questions present in the letter. Peak body Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) is [currently seeking clarification](#) for the information requested; and you can find a legal breakdown of the first communication [here](#).

CEO of Dementia Australia, Maree McCabe has expressed the importance of the Royal Commission as an 'opportunity for change', and a chance to look at what works and what doesn't work in current dementia care. You can read her article [here](#).

Peak bodies ACSA & Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) have established support systems for Providers for the royal commission. You can contact the ACSA Royal Commission Advisory Panel [here](mailto:RC@acsa.asn.au): RC@acsa.asn.au and LASA's member services for the Royal Commission [here](#).

AFFILIATE AGREEMENTS

Transparency in Aged Care has been highlighted even more so in the recent events of the announcement of the Royal Commission, and the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio

Disclosure) Bill 2018. Multimedia publishing services company, DPS Publishing, have initiated the [Affiliate Agreements](#); supporting and advocating transparency and improved outcomes in Aged Care. These agreements have been signed by ACSA, LASA, Aged Care Industry Association (ACIA) and Council on the Ageing (COTA).

The push for transparency comes alongside the conversation surrounding staffing ratios, with the Staffing Disclosure Bill introduced to parliament by Rebekah Sharkie in August this year; which would see staffing ratios published quarterly. South Australian Senator Skye Kaskoschke-Moore is also pushing for changes to the legislation which would [oblige Aged Care Providers to publish all non-compliance notices and penalties](#) on their websites.

To continue on the theme of transparency in Aged Care, the Senate Economics References Committee have called for the [transparency in for-profit Aged Care Provider tax practices](#); to stamp out alleged tax avoidance. The Financial and Tax Practices of For-Profit Aged Care Providers Report [recommended stricter reporting requirements to be implemented](#). However, coalition MPs are calling the inquiry a 'waste of time', stating that there is no evidence of illegal tax avoidance.

AGED CARE PRICING COMMISSIONERS REPORT

The [Aged Care Pricing Commissioner's 2017/18 Report](#) was released at the close of October. The Report provides information on the trends of the past 5 years as well as all information required to be reported under the Aged Care Act 1997 and other facets that fall under the Commissioner's operations. ACSA highlighted [an area of interest](#) being the approved price range of rooms over the past 5 years. Renewal applications have also been a ['main area of activity'](#), as stressed by new Commissioner John Dicer.

AGED CARE QUALITY & SAFETY COMMISSION BILL PASSED IN SENATE

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is due to commence on the 1 January 2019, and was listed for a final debate on the 14th November 2018. ACSA [reported that amendments had been introduced](#) that reflected [concerns raised by them](#), and they were pleased to see these being addressed. Providers welcomed the legislation passing in late November. You can read the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 [here](#).

ACFI COMPLEX HEALTH CARE – PAIN MANAGEMENT (12.3 AND 12.4)

In November, The Department updated their FAQs to give additional clarity around as to who qualifies as a health professional for the provision of services in the pain management area. One of the key points of this FAQ advised that Allied Health professionals with 'limited' registration could not provide complex health care services under ACFI items 12.4a and 12.4b. This release resulted in email traffic to the Department to reconsider this advice, and Department withdrew this FAQ until consultation with peak sector representatives had occurred. On the 7th December, The Department released an update to advise that after consideration of the concerns of the peak sector and Allied Health representatives, "Allied Health professionals with 'limited' registration will be

eligible to provide pain management services under ACFI 12.4a and 12.4b provided that they are”:

- operating within their scope of practice;
- being supervised according to the terms of their registration.

The FAQ section for Question 12 has been updated accordingly, and [you can read further on the matter here](#).

STAFFING RATIOS

The inquiry into the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio Disclosure) Bill 2018 held on the 26 October has found that the Bill is complicated and isn't necessarily the best indicator of quality, [ACSA have summarised](#). The inquiry intended to analyse the Bill and investigate its principles; recommending, or not recommending the amendments. You can [read the proceedings here](#).

CCTV OPT-IN

CCTV cameras in Aged Care have been a big topic since the airing of the Four Corners 2-part investigation 'Who cares?' that showed footage taken from hidden cameras. Out of South Australia, MP Frank Pangallo has put forward The [Supported Residential Facilities \(Aged Care Facilities\) Amendment Bill 2018](#). This bill would make it compulsory for facilities to [provide an option for Residents and their families to opt-in](#) to having a CCTV camera installed in their rooms. With privacy always a complicated aspect of any conversation around CCTV, one facility has revoked permission for a camera that was originally installed in a South Australian Resident's room to [reflect the interests of the staff, Residents and their rights to privacy](#). This also prompts discussion around new technologies that could eradicate the privacy concerns, whilst continuing to ensure the safety of people in care. One such technology that made its way to Australia earlier in the year is [Care Protect](#), a UK-based system that has operated for four years overseas. You can read more about the system [here](#).

ACCORD ON THE REMOTE AGED CARE WORKFORCE

The [Aged Care Workforce Taskforce](#) has highlighted supporting and expanding the remote Aged Care workforce, one of 14 actions released as a part of the [Aged Care Workforce Strategy](#). The Accord on the Remote Aged Care Workforce has been formed to tackle workforce issues in remote and very remote areas, with the understanding that they are specific issues and solutions need to be informed by those who work in these areas. The Accord comprises of Providers and organisations experienced in the remote care sector.

The Aged Services Industry Reference Committee (IRC), established to respond to recommendations from the Aged Care Workforce Strategy, has also announced its Chair and Deputy Chair: Mr Ian Hardy, Chief Executive of Helping Hand Aged Care and Mr Robert Bonner, Director Operations and Strategy at Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation respectively.

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS AGED CARE STATS

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has released a new examination of the 2015 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. The analysis gives an overview of people living in residential Aged Care in Australia and for those interested, you can read the summary of findings [here](#).

TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION & FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

Technological advancement, innovation and research had a busy month in November in the Aged Care industry. From software to assist older people to stay at home, to social connection systems for those in care to have contact with their families, here is a summary of the exciting innovative updates in Aged Care this month!

- [Care Konnect](#) is a new all-in-one platform, designed to replace email, text messages and phone calls and consolidate them all into an easy to use app. The app intends to keep people connected to their families, friends and the community;
- [Hector VR](#), a new Virtual Reality project for older Australian drivers has begun trials in New South Wales. Hector focuses on people aged between 70 to 80 and helps to maintain their proficiency on the road;
- [RMIT has joined with innovAGEING](#), Australia's Aged Care industry innovation network, to work together in research and delivering positive and innovative outcomes to the sector;
- A [technology start up, titled 'Billy'](#), is partnering with a South Australian Aged Care Provider to work towards their shared interest of supported older people to stay in their own homes for longer;
- A [Perth community organisation, Village Hub](#), has been established, engaging older people with one another through social, learning and active activities, assisting them to live independently for longer;
- [Research is being undertaken at the University of Melbourne](#) to investigate technology in the Aged Care sector and how this can benefit Residents and Staff in the industry, and any challenges it brings to the surface;
- [The ITAC 2018 conference celebrated innovation and solutions](#) to improve the lives of older people with their awards event in November, honouring winners in 5 different categories;
- InnovAGEING is calling for [Providers who have created ageing-related concepts, services and business models](#) that will enhance the lives of older people in care;
- [More than \\$27M of funding](#) from the Government is being delivered to the Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research (CEPAR) to investigate meeting the challenges of an ageing population over the next 7 years;
- The Government has announced Aged Care as one of the priorities for research and innovation as part of the Medical Research Future Fund for 2018 – 2020;

- [A new online course](#), PainChek®, has been developed by Dementia Training Australia to train Aged Care workers to identify pain in those who are unable to communicate it, such as those living with Dementia.

It is an exciting time for technology, research and innovation in the industry in Australia!

HOME CARE

The 2018-19 Budget release raised a lot of concerns surrounding Home Care packages, with the additional 14,000 high-level packages to be delivered over the next four years expected to barely dent the waiting list. Nearing the end of the year, there has been an increase in the numbers of people with a Home Care package by 30%; but a further 126,732 people waiting for a package. The Home Care Packages Program Data Report for the 1st Quarter 2018-19 provides an update on the Home Care packages Program operations; you can read this [here](#).

ACFA SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Following the response to the release of the [Aged Care Financing Authority \(ACFA\) Report](#) in July this year, with many Providers concerned about the changes to ACFI and the 2017-18 indexation pause, a [Supplementary Financial Performance Report](#) has been released. The Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care, Ken Wyatt, had asked for an update from ACFA to provide an assessment of funding and financing issues that are currently impacting the Aged Care industry.

DECLINE IN INDIGENOUS SENIORS ACCESSING CARE

A recent report, 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People using aged care' has identified a decline in the number of indigenous Australians utilising Aged Care services in 2018, compared with 2017. Non-indigenous Australians also declined in their use of Aged Care services, but a greater number required Aged Care services than the indigenous population. You can read the [full report here](#), and a summary of the report by the Australian Ageing Agenda [here](#).

LGBTIQ AGED CARE ADVOCATE HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

The Aged Care industry can be proud with Dr Catherine Barrett, the Director of social enterprise [Celebrate Ageing](#), nominated for a Human Rights Medal for her work and advocacy for older Australians. [Dr Barrett has done amazing work](#) confronting ageism and supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning (LGBTIQ) elders.

RESIDENTS KNIT & SEW FOR ANIMALS IN NEED

A beautiful story this month, with Residents from a Queensland facility making pouches and liners for local rescued wildlife. In return, the facility was visited by the rescue animals who had been or would be helped as a result of the products! You can read more on this story [here](#), and view [a video on the beautiful encounter here!](#)

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/>



LISSIE LYONS – CHAMPION OF PROJECTS & INNOVATION
Author