

INDUSTRY UPDATE – JANUARY

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The first month of the new year has passed, and what a month it was. A huge time for the industry with the first of many important dates for the Royal Commission, a submission due date and the first public hearing. Home Care received a boost in funding, along with changes to care packages, and the latest StewartBrown report was released, sparking further conversation about the funding of the sector. The new Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission has officially begun operation and a new Workforce Industry Council is to be established. Let's review the busy start to 2019!

ROYAL COMMISSION

The Royal Commission means it has been a very busy start to the new year for the industry, and we know that many teams have been working overtime and throughout the holiday period to reach the first submission deadline of 7th January 2019 for the 100 largest Providers and 8th February for all other organisations.

The first public hearing of the Royal Commission was held on the 18th January 2019. The hearing saw the commissioners, Lynelle Briggs and Richard Tracey give individual statements on how the Royal Commission will run with a '[focus on the future](#)'. You can access live and past hearings via the webcast channel [here](#).

The start of the Royal Commission has [garnered support and hope from peak bodies in the sector](#).

[Family members and whistleblowers of the Oakden facility](#), the horrific case that is believed to have begun the conversation around the need for a Royal Commission, have shared their feelings towards being denied seats in the hearing room for the initial hearing on the 18th January.

The [first witness hearings](#) began on the 11th February 2019 in Adelaide, and are expected to go into the following week. The witnesses will include Provider and consumer peak bodies, and people who have firsthand accounts of Aged Care.

For advice on the next steps following the Provider survey submission, you can read [Russell Kennedy's advice for data collection here](#).

An interim report is required to be submitted by the Commission by the 31 October 2019 and the final report by 30 April 2020.

USE OF RESTRAINTS

On the eve of the first Royal Commission hearing, Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care, Ken Wyatt, announced that there would [soon be better regulations for physical and chemical restraints](#) in Aged Care. [Footage aired on ABC's 7:30](#) on the 16th January showed a dementia Resident sedated without permission from the family, along with footage of an elderly man who was physically restrained, attempting to move across a room. Peak body Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) will be working with the government on the new regulations, with the aim to put ["Resident health and care first"](#).

The Royal Commission will be examining the use of sedative medication and physical restraints and the newly established Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission [has made a statement that you can read here](#).

AGED CARE QUALITY & SAFETY COMMISSION

The new Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission officially commenced operation on January 1st 2019. Initially announced in April 2018 [in response to key recommendations in the Carnell-Paterson Review](#), the Commission combines what was the former Australian Aged Care Quality Agency and the Aged Care Complaints Commission.

The Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission is led by Commissioner Janet Anderson, supported by Professor Michael Murray who was named as the interim chief clinical advisor in 2018.

In its opening days, the commission announced that more [unannounced audits and inspections would take place, 'tripling' the number of unannounced re-accreditation audits](#) in 2019 in comparison to 2018.

A new website for the commission has been launched, which [you can find here](#).

PARKINSON'S RESEARCH FUNDING

In fantastic news for Parkinson's research, a [funding boost of \\$30 million has been announced](#) to be rolled out over a period of five years. Working towards improving the lives of those living with the disease and on a cure, the funding will be given to the Garvan Institute of Medical Research's *Australian Parkinson Mission*.

In addition to the funding boost news, a grant has been received from The Michael J. Fox Foundation and the Shake It Up Australia Foundation by the UNSW and Neuroscience Research Australia (NeuRA). The grant will be used to test 'Smart Socks'; socks designed to help stop falls in people with Parkinson's and help rewire

the brain to assist with walking ability. You can read [Aged Care 101's wrap up here](#), and [NeuRA's summary here](#).

AGED CARE STANDARDS UPDATE

The industry is well into the transition period to the new single Aged Care Quality Standards, with the official start date for assessment against them to begin on the 1 July 2019. In January, the Provider resource guide was updated by the Department of Health. This update was added to Standard 3 – Personal Care and Clinical Care, and refers to the use of chemical restraint and appropriate use.

The [amendment comes as a part of the review process](#) of the standards during the transition period, and follows the media reports of the inappropriate use of both chemical and physical restraints in Aged Care.

In addition to the update, [a Self-Assessment Guidance Tool for the new standards has been released](#), to encourage Providers to start using the resource in preparation for the transition on 1 July 2019. Submissions of self-assessments against the new Standards are not required until the transition date.

The commission is also assisting Providers through education resources such as [Webinars](#) and [education workshops to support the industry throughout the transition phase](#).

You can [view the new Self-Assessment Guidance tool](#) here and read the Guidance to the Aged Care Quality Standards [here](#).

AGED CARE POLICY, PROVISION & PROSPECTS FACT SHEET

The Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing and Research (CEPAR) has released a helpful fact sheet that is an overview of the industry. Covering policy, industry and the workforce, the fact sheet shows where the industry currently is, trends, key reforms and recent changes.

You can [view the fact sheet here](#).

RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY DOWN AND WAIT TIMES UP, REPORT SHOWS

The Productivity Commission recently released a report on Government services, that stated that [the wait time to enter Residential Aged Care had increased by 16 days in the last year](#), up from an average of 105 days in 2016/2017 to 121 days in 2017/2018.

The report also shared that Aged Care occupancy rates appeared to be at a 10-year low, despite increased wait times. However, [StewartBrown have offered reasoning behind the contradictory figures](#) and an explanation of why the low occupancy rates do not match their own findings from their reporting of the same year. The two reasons named were:

- Government-run facilities make up approximately 10% of the sector, and;
- StewartBrown reports occupancy based on available bed numbers, as opposed to approved places

The report can be found [here](#).

STEWARTBROWN REPORT

The latest StewartBrown for the quarter ending September 2018 was released in January, [concluding that the trend of the decline in financial performance was continuing](#). The survey, with 946 Residential Aged Care facilities as participants, showed that 41.4% of facilities were still operating at a loss, which was an increase from 33.9% at the same time the previous year. While the report does show some increases in ACFI funding from the end of the 2018 financial year, these were attributed by StewartBrown to the increase in the Commonwealth Own-Purpose Expenses (COPE).

You can view the [Stewart Brown report here](#).

Although the StewartBrown report continues to show the declining trend in profit loss that has continued since 2016, the Productivity Commission report on Government services [showed an increase on Aged Care spending](#) from \$17.56 billion in 2016-2017 to \$18.4 billion in 2017-2018.

DEMENTIA

Dementia advocate Ita Buttrose has been awarded an honorary UNSW Medicine doctorate, for her role in [providing exceptional services to health and the community](#), as well as women in business. A Dementia Australia Ambassador, Ita Buttrose has been partnered with the organisation for a number of years. CEO of Dementia Australia, Maree McCabe, [has congratulated Ita in the Dementia Australia newsletter](#), thanking her for her outstanding support and commitment.

In more news for dementia, the Government has begun to roll out the Specialist Dementia Care Program (SDCP), for people who display severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, who may not be able to be cared for appropriately in an ordinary Aged Care setting. [The prototype will be developed by Brightwater Care Group in Perth](#). Eventually, the SDCP will cater for 300 people

nationally and is [expected to have its first units operational in 2020](#), with a full roll out by 2022-23.

You can [read further on the SDCP here](#).

HOME CARE & CHANGES TO HOME CARE PACKAGES

December and January were busy months for Home Care. An announcement from the Department of Health in December 2018 as a part of the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) referred to changes to the basic daily fee for levels one, two and three home care packages, along with the additional 10,000 new high level Home Care Packages. The changes mean that there are reductions to the maximum basic daily fee that an Aged Care Provider can charge. It has been confirmed that [these changes will commence on the 1st July 2019](#).

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) will also [receive a funding boost](#) as part of the Government's \$100 million two-year growth plan. An additional \$15 million will be allocated to CHSP Providers as a part of the \$5.5 billion allocated to CHSP services.

In further news, Minister Ken Wyatt stated on ABC's 7:30 in January that [Home Care Providers are also going to be facing a review](#), to ensure that standards are met and registration requirements are appropriate. With 3 Home Care Providers sanctioned in 2018 and a further 14 served with non-compliance notices, [Mr Wyatt has said he feels "no sympathy"](#) for those sanctioned and that Providers who are not up to standard needed to be eradicated.

The Productivity Commission's report has shown that [Government spending on Home Care rose last year](#), spending \$5.1 billion on Home Care and support services, as opposed to \$4.5 billion in 2016-17.

RURAL FUNDING

The Multi-Purpose Service Program [has been extended across five states](#) with the Government's \$4M annual investment into flexible Aged Care places. The funding for rural Aged Care services means that new multi-purpose services can be launched, existing services expanded and the delivery of higher-level care across 26 centres over different states.

Read further on the [Multi-Purpose Service Program here](#).

AGED CARE WORKFORCE INDUSTRY COUNCIL

The Aged Care Guild, Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA) and Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) [have united in support of the formation of an Aged Care Workforce Industry Council](#). The Aged Care workforce has been a focus for the industry for some time, with the Aged Care Workforce Taskforce established by the Government to address the workforce requirements for the rapidly growing sector. The [head of the Taskforce, John Pollears, recommended the establishment of a council in the A Matter of Care report](#), comprising of industry chief executives. The peak bodies have agreed that an industry-led council is crucial to ensure that Australia's Aged Care workforce strategy empowers the industry and its workforce.

In more news for the industry's workforce, [new data from the Department of Jobs and Small Business](#) continues to confirm the rising need for Aged Care workers, supporting the findings of the Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce.

LIFE CHECKS

The Government is rolling out its More Choices For A Longer Life measures by inviting Australians over the age of 45 to take a free online '[Life Check](#)'. The Life Check is aimed to give free advice and help for Australians to plan for a longer, better life.

You can access the [Life Checks website here](#).

MOVE IT AUS GRANTS

As reported in our [September Industry Update](#), the Move it Aus – Better Ageing program launched in late 2018 with grants available to national sporting organisations and physical activity providers. The first of twenty-seven organisations who will share in the \$22.9M of funding over the next two years has been announced to be [Football Federation Australia's Walking Football program](#).

With research showing that only [1 in 4 Australians over the age of 65 meet the Department of Health's physical activity guidelines](#), there has been enthusiasm to utilise the Better Ageing grants to promote and assist in Australians leading healthier and longer lives.

AGED CARE DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

As a part of the Government's Aged Care Diversity framework Action Plan, [Aged Care consumers and providers were asked to help provide information for the Homelessness Action plan](#). Intending to assist Australians at risk of homelessness, or currently homeless, the Housing of the Aged Action Group (HAAG) focuses on older Australians in these positions. Two surveys were developed and invited all

Providers and services working with older people to complete. The surveys closed on the 8th February 2019.

FUNDING FOR LGBTIQA SERVICE CUT

Switchboard, the Victorian based LGBTIQA support service who visit older LGBTIQA Victorians [has lost two-thirds of its funding for the Community Visitors Scheme \(CVS\)](#). The scheme is designed to reduce loneliness amongst those in Residential Aged Care and Switchboard is the only specialist service visiting LGBTIQA Victorians. Despite overall funding for the CVS not being reduced, the funding has been directed towards different programs. You can [read more on the Switchboard program here](#).

AGED CARE, ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

LifeCare, a South-Australian organisation, [has received international recognition for its dementia facility design](#). Receiving a Gold Standard Accreditation from the Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC) in the UK, the award is the first to be given to a facility in the Southern Hemisphere. You can read more in [LifeCare's Summer 2018 newsletter here](#).

Moving to Queensland news, [Aged Care Provider Ozcare has proposed plans for two towers](#); one being a vertical village with independent living units, and an Aged Care facility. Architects Conrad Gargett have been secured for the design and planning to ["deliver a premium mixed-use project, comprising residential, retail and commercial amenities for community benefit...\[and\] enliven this significant Newstead site for residents to age-in-place"](#). Following four other high rise retirement and Aged Care developments in Brisbane, it is interesting to watch the Aged Care industry go up!

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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