

Communique

16th February 2024

The [National Aged Care Alliance](#) ('the Alliance') met in Canberra on 15th & 16th February 2024.

Main topics of discussion

The following key issues were discussed by members at the meetings:

- The exposure draft of the new Aged Care Act
- The interface between health and aged care
- Single Assessment Workforce
- COVID in residential aged care
- Access to services

Considerations on the exposure draft of the new Aged Care Act

In addition to the in-person meeting held on 15 & 16 February, the Alliance held an online member session to share views on the proposed Act on 1 February 2024. Members welcomed the opportunity to identify the areas of consensus and divergence across the sector on the new Act through these meetings.

Key points arising in relation to the Act include that:

- The passage of a new rights-based Aged Care Act is an urgent priority in 2024.
- Consultation must occur on the following with adequate time to respond and Parliamentary processes to occur:
 - the chapters missing from the exposure draft;
 - final design of Support at Home;
 - plans to transition from the current Act to the new Act; and
 - the full suite of subordinate legislation.
- There is a need to make the role of the Complaints Commissioner statutory, independent, appointed by the Minister with dedicated funding and staffing line items.
- There is more work needed to be able to implement the proposed changes to supported decision-making.
- There is a need to ensure a right to services based on assessed need.
- There is a need for time limits on government decisions in the Act.
- Eligibility for First Nations peoples aged 45+.
- The introduction of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Alliance discussions also covered a range of areas with a range of views including: missing detail such as fees, payments and subsidies, the independence of the Complaints Commissioner, inclusion of the First Nations Aged Care Commissioner, assessment processes, penalty units, rights of workers, balancing competing rights, the introduction of additional international Conventions including the UNDRIP and ICCPR (to provide greater Constitutional authority), enforceability of rights, the interface with the health system, culturally sensitive and trauma-informed services, appropriate services for First Nations elders, and the implementation and consultation timeframes.

Alliance activities

Alliance activities that were progressed in this quarter included:

- Communications procedures
- A paper on career development and pathways for the aged care workforce
- A paper on the implementation of AN-ACC
- Consideration of the upcoming election and other key political processes

Government and Department representatives in attendance

The following representatives joined the meeting to contribute to discussions on key topics.

- Andrea Kelly, Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner
- Lisa Peterson, Assistant Commissioner, Sector Capability and Regulatory Strategy, ACQSC
- Michael Lye, Deputy Secretary, Ageing and Aged Care Group, DoHAC
- Thea Connolly, First Assistant Secretary, Home and Residential Division, DoHAC
- Amy Laffan, First Assistant Secretary, Quality and Assurance Division, DoHAC
- Julia Atkinson, A/g Assistant Secretary, Home Care & Assessments, DoHAC

About the National Aged Care Alliance

The [National Aged Care Alliance](#) is the leading coalition of national aged care peak bodies in Australia. Our Members represent the core constituencies involved in the delivery of federally funded aged care services: consumers, service providers, unions and professional bodies.

We work together to establish a more positive future for aged care in Australia.

We exist to advocate for older and ageing people to be at the centre of an aged care system that delivers high quality services, and a needs-based approach that ensures equitable outcomes and access to services and supports, whilst embracing the diverse characteristics and life experiences of people who need aged care services now and/or in the future, including their family/friend carers. The Alliance champions a human rights-based approach to aged care.

We proactively influence and shape ongoing reform of the aged care and interconnecting systems, such as health, housing and disability that support older and ageing people.

Note on the conduct of meetings

National Aged Care Alliance meetings are held under the Chatham House rule. This means participants are free to use the information received but cannot reveal the identity or affiliation of the speaker(s) or participants. Participants may indicate if information is to remain confidential to those in the room or if information can be publicly attributed to them. People named in this communique have given their permission to be publicly acknowledged as being in attendance.

National Aged Care Alliance Members

As at February 2024¹



Australian College of Nursing



¹ We note the Australasian Services Care Network is a member but was not able to support this statement.