

Australian Aged Care Quality Agency's Statement of Intent

This Statement of Intent outlines the response of the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency (Quality Agency) to the Minister's Statement of Expectations for the Quality Agency.

The Quality Agency will continue to operate independently and objectively in performing its day-to-day business in a way that maintains its reputation as a world-class accreditation agency, retains the trust of the public, and supports and promotes the quality of care for Australians receiving aged care services.

The Quality Agency following close consultation with the Aged Care Quality Advisory Council has published its corporate plan that outlines the Quality Agency's vision that older Australians have quality care choices that enhance their lives. The Quality Agency's Corporate Plan is aligned with the Government's commitment to good corporate governance and reducing red tape for business and the community.

The Quality Agency will implement its corporate plan by:

- ensuring that its workforce is trained and equipped to consistently and accurately assess provider performance against the Accreditation Standards, Home Care Standards, and the NATSIFAC Program Quality Framework;
- working with providers of aged care services in the community to foster positive relationships and develop expertise in the issues and trends relating to this sector;
- focussing its education program to improve the quality of Home Care and NATSIFAC;
- raising public awareness and confidence in the accreditation process and regulatory framework by providing consistent and transparent information to consumers about the accreditation processes;
- assessing and identify where red tape and regulation can be reduced and seek policy options that offer the greatest net benefit; and
- implementing more cost-effective ways to ensure compliance with the Accreditation Standards and promote continuous quality improvement across the aged care sector.

Independence and accountability in exercise of functions

The Quality Agency will act independently and objectively in performing functions and exercising powers as set out in the *Aged Care Quality Agency Act 2013* (the Quality Agency Act), the *Quality Agency Principles 2013* (the Principles) and the *Aged Care Act 1997* (the Act).

The Quality Agency recognises that it is important for it to take into account the Government's broad policy framework in performance of its roles and responsibilities. In this regard it recognises the importance of actions to identify and reduce compliance costs on the community to assist in the Government's stated aim of improving productivity across the Australian economy. The Quality Agency will apply a rigorous approach to reducing red tape and continue to seek practical solutions that balance risk with the need for regulation.

Contribution to Aged Care Reforms

The Quality Agency will contribute to the Aged Care Reforms which include:

- the implementation of Consumer Directed Care (CDC)
- reforms to the Home Care Programme
- the establishment of a single quality framework
- reduction of red tape

In addition, the Quality Agency will work with the Department of Health (the department) on the aged care reform initiatives announced in the 2015-16 Budget, including:

- the expansion of cost recovery arrangements for accreditation services; and
- competitive market provision of accreditation services.

The Quality Agency will perform its functions to a high standard and contribute to effective implementation of CDC and other aged care changes. The Quality Agency recognises that consumers wish to have better informed choices about their care knowing that safety and compliance are assured.

The Quality Agency will be responsive to Government's aged care reforms including contributing to policy work around consumer facing information, engaging consumer feedback and streamlining regulatory activities for aged care providers with multiple service types.

The Quality Agency will be mindful in its dealings with industry, of the Government's focus on CDC and promote the importance of consumers and their carers having greater control of their own lives by allowing them to choose the types of care and services they access and the delivery of those services, including who will deliver the services and when.

Stakeholder Relationships

The Quality Agency will provide responsive service to the Minister, and work collaboratively with the department and our key stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of the regulatory framework in aged care. The Quality Agency will inform the Minister and the Secretary of the Department of any key trends or issues that arise pertaining to quality of aged care services.

The Quality Agency will promote quality of care through its Better Practice Conference program, Better Practice Awards program, education program, and continue to raise public awareness and encouraging continuous improvement amongst providers of aged care services, including those from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities, and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

In addition, the Quality Agency will further develop its processes to engage and inform consumers and their families regarding the accreditation and quality review process and use this information to provide feedback to consumers and providers about the quality of aged care.

Organisational Governance and Financial Management

The Quality Agency will continue to be governed by the relevant provisions of the *Public Service Act 1999* and relevant financial management legislation, including the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and its associated instruments and policies. We are committed to upholding and promoting the APS values, as well as adhering to the APS Code of Conduct. The Quality Agency will ensure its governance framework provides effective direction and control over its management and operations. This year the Quality Agency will review its finance and human resource management policies to ensure and confirm consistency with public sector governance.

Conclusion

The Quality Agency's intent is to maintain leadership and public confidence and in accreditation and quality review system for aged care. The Quality Agency will provide consistent and meaningful assessments of standards in accordance with the Government's focus on red tape reduction and in a manner which minimises cost and impact on providers.

The Quality Agency has a clear focus on the results to be achieved by working in partnership with the sector, sharing knowledge of success, managing feedback from consumers and providers about standards of care, and providing leadership and continuous improvement in service quality.