



Your peak body's take on the week in aged care



**Talks to continue with Consumer Affairs Ministers on RVs...
watch this space...**

This week, we continued our engagement with political decision-makers on the topic of retirement villages and the complex consumer debate unfolding around contracts and transparency.

On Tuesday afternoon, I met with an Adviser to Minister McCormack – the Federal Minister for Small Business (which includes Consumer Affairs) and the Minister with jurisdiction over retirement villages.

For now, our focus is on progressing our discussions with decision-makers in coming weeks, including scheduling meetings with relevant State/Territory Ministers ahead of the Consumers Affairs Ministers Meeting.

We plan on working constructively with the relevant Ministers so that, should there be any additional requirements introduced, those requirements are sympathetic to the needs of providers as they work for the delivery of quality retirement villages. Following the Ministers meeting we can determine whether there are any further steps we believe we need to take as an industry.

In other news, it was national Homelessness Week this week, and ACSA used the opportunity to speak up on behalf of those members of ours providing vital aged care services to older Australian's either homeless, or at risk of becoming so.

Organisations like the Salvation Army, Wesley Mission, and Wintringham - Australia's largest aged care provider for the homeless - do invaluable work providing aged care services for those disadvantaged members of the community who might otherwise have no access to housing, let alone aged care services.

With the rapid ageing on the population, we know this issue of aged homelessness will only become more prominent and we will take the opportunities where we can to urge government to be mindful of the funding needs, and otherwise, of this unique group of providers committed to the aged homeless.

Pat Sparrow
CEO, ACSA

Response to Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee

ACSA's submission in response to the [Senate Community Affairs References Committee](#) inquiry into the effectiveness of the aged care quality assessment and accreditation framework is available [here](#).

2017 Tasmanian Aged Care Awards

Nominations are now open for the 2017 Tasmanian Aged Care Awards. [Click here to download a copy of the nomination form and guidelines](#)

We want to share your positive stories

The team at ACSA knows our members provide innovative and quality services to those they care for and we want to share these stories.

If you'd like to share a good news story about your organisation in *ACSA Weekly* or *eAgendas*, please send it to communications@acsa.asn.au.

ACSA Weekly distribution

We want to ensure that important industry information and updates reach as many people, in as many different organisations across the country as possible.

If you'd like your colleagues, employees or Board members to also receive *ACSA Weekly*, please encourage them to email communications@acsa.asn.au and ask to be placed on our distribution list. You may also like to circulate the [attached sign-up sheet](#) or print out for your next staff meeting. If so, please return the completed sheet to communications@acsa.asn.au.

ACSA National Summit 2017

[Registrations](#) for the [30th Aged & Community Services Australia \(ACSA\) National Summit](#) are open! This year's Summit will be held at the Cairns Convention Centre from 12-14 September.



ACSA in the Media

- Australian Ageing Agenda - [Rural aged care urged to consider co-op approach](#)

Please [click here](#) for all recent ACSA media releases.

What's happening in your backyard?

[NSW/ACT](#)

[SA/NT](#)

[TAS](#)

[VIC](#)

[WA](#)



No news for QLD this week.

Upcoming Events

7th International Carers Conference 4–6 October

The [7th International Carers Conference](#) will be held at the Adelaide Convention Centre and will provide the forum to discuss and debate issues around unpaid family caring, where there will be more people to care for than carers willing and able to take on the role. Hosted by [Carers Australia](#), *Caring into the Future: The New World?* will bring together national and international experts who will give us insights into intelligent, futuristic and inclusive technology, pioneering innovations, the digital health revolution, lived carer experience and leading-edge research.

Anti-Poverty Week 15–21 October

The aims of the week are to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and in Australia; and encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments. Find out how you can be involved [here](#).

5th National Elder Abuse Conference: 'Together Making Change', 19-20 February 2018, Sydney

Elder abuse affects at least 5% of Australians – that's more than 175,000 people. It takes many forms including financial, psychological, physical and sexual abuse and neglect, and crosses all socioeconomic and cultural borders. This important social issue needs to be discussed and addressed across Australia. The '**Call For Abstracts**' has just opened, so if you have a project or idea you'd like to share on the topic of Elder Abuse, we encourage you to submit an Abstract (*closing date 1 September*). [Read more.](#)



ACSA/Criterion Conferences

Despite undergoing significant reform in February 2017, many aged care providers have not yet seen radical changes to consumer mobility. As consumers become more comfortable exercising their right to choose, smaller providers risk losing them to bigger commercial providers who are able to invest heavily in promotional tactics. While you may not be significantly affected by reform today, with continued inaction, this will not be the case in a year's time.

How can you leverage marketing, pricing and customer experience to compete against big commercial providers?

Unique opportunities with SAGE UK 4-14 April 2018

Offering exclusive insights into the UK's senior living systems and unique networking opportunities, our SAGE tour to the [United Kingdom](#), 4-14 April 2018 will take you to elder care facilities and education institutions in both Scotland and England.

The SAGE Post tour program tour (14-19 April 2018) includes attendance at our partner CommonAge's inaugural Commonwealth Elders' Forum. With delegates attending from across the Commonwealth and the event aligning with the 2018 Commonwealth Heads Of Government Meeting, it offers excellent opportunities to be at the forefront of ageing in the Commonwealth.



[Click here](#) to find out more and reserve your place.

Publications, reports, grants and resources

- **Information for Aged Care Providers –**
[Issue 2017/14](#)
- **Medicare** [News for Aged Care Providers](#)

Data Exchange portal enhancements

There are some important changes happening in the portal this coming weekend, and these will be visible to all users from Monday 7 August 2017. [Click here](#) to view.

My Aged Care system changes delivered

On 24 July 2017 a number of system changes were successfully made to My Aged Care. These improvements are a result of intensive consultation with the aged care sector which occurred in late 2016. To find out more, refer to the detailed [summary of changes](#). [Read more.](#)

\$40 million for dementia research projects

The Turnbull Government is allocating more than \$40 million to medical research projects which will improve the lives of Australians fighting dementia. Dementia is one of the leading causes of death in Australia. [Read more.](#)

Making it easier and faster to claim the Age Pension

A suite of changes are speeding up the Age Pension claim process, making it quicker and easier for older Australians. The Government is streamlining the Age Pension claim process and improving the user experience for those who claim online. [Read more.](#)

NACA Aged Care Reform Update - July 2017

[Click here to access](#)

Consultation on draft National Palliative Care Strategy

[Click here to access](#)

The new ACSA ELearning portal is now live

Please [click here](#) to access.

ACSA training resources

Valuable resources for residential aged care and home care workers. [Find out more](#)

Australasian Journal on Ageing© AJA, Inc.

[Early View](#) (Online Version of Record published before inclusion in an issue)

The Donaldson Sisters Newsletter

[Click here for more information and to subscribe](#)



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Linking will support ACSA and it's members have a voice.

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2016/17 Acquittals

Dear Service Provider

[2016-17 Acquittal and Compliance Guide for Disability Funded Service Providers](#) (the Guide) is available on the [Service Portal](#) and ADHC website.

You are not required to submit your acquittal and ACR at this point in time.

ADHC will advise you when you can submit your acquittal and ACR in September 2017.

Please also be aware that appeals related to 2015-16 acquittals or earlier will no longer be accepted by ADHC.

ADHC recognises that for many providers their financial accounts are complicated because of ADHC payments, funding variations and the switch over to payments from the NDIA. [The Guide](#) specifies how ADHC payments and variations for the NDIS transition should be acquitted.

Providers that have not had their funding affected by the NDIS transition can acquit as normal for 2016-17.

Should you have questions about acquittals please call 1300 136 067 or email funding.administration@facs.nsw.gov.au.

Regards

Stephen Chanphakeo
Director, Funding Operations

For further information, contact 1300 136 067 or email portal@facs.nsw.gov.au

Visit the Service Portal at www.portal.facs.nsw.gov.au

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ACSA Member Update

Special Home Care Edition Implementation of Increasing Choice in Home Care changes

This special members update is in response to member queries and feedback ACSA about the changes to home care packages introduced in February this year. The advice below is designed to assist you with the ongoing implementation of the Increasing Choices initiative.

National Prioritisation and package release

- As of 20 June 2017 – 43,311 packages released – Level 1: 5433; Level 2: 27609; Level 3: 4613; Level 4: 5656.

- By end of 2016-17 the Department will have released a total of 9,222 new packages
- This is on track to meet the ratio target of 45 places per 1000 people over 70 by 2021-22
- Members have concerns about slow entries through the new system and the Department are monitoring this
- Anecdotally consumers are taking up their packages later in the 56- day timeframe which is what ACSA suggested would happen
- If take up is slow the Department will make adjustments to the package release – to account for inactive packages
- The Department is reviewing processes and communication to determine why take up is slower than anticipated. They recently conducted a phone survey of 500 consumers who had been assigned packages but had not taken up care –the outcomes will help to refine the system and future communications
- Individual expected wait times are likely to be made available to consumers by August 2017 – once the data is fully validated and stable

My Aged Care System

- Providers and clients have experienced a range of issues with MyAged Care following implementation. The majority of these issues required manual intervention and are now largely resolved.
- More recently, an issue that has been raised by providers and consumers is that some home care clients have had their package withdrawn in error by the My Aged Care system. The Department investigates these issues when My Aged Care escalates it.
- A number of articles issued by the Department have included information on the correct process to follow to ensure packages are not withdrawn in error and all providers are encouraged to sign up to receive the Department's newsletters. If home care providers have concerns regarding their clients that have had a package withdrawn, they should contact My Aged Care on 1800 836 799 for further investigation.
- The following links are to previous notices that have been distributed by the Department to assist providers:
 - [Information for Aged Care Providers Issue 2017/9](#)
 - [Home Care Package Withdrawals](#)
- To minimise the likelihood of a client's package being withdrawn in error, it is essential that home care providers accept referrals in My Aged Care for clients they have in care and submit entry information to DHS as quickly as possible.

- Some manual data intervention has been required to fix the above issues. The Department is working to resolve identified system issues.
- The Department will reinstate packages where an error has occurred and where necessary, claims will be backdated to ensure there is no financial disadvantage to providers.

DHS System Update

- DHS have been working through synchronisation and transition issues since the February changes and have focussed on identification and support around claims
- They have been working closely with DoH to identify issues and make process as clean as possible
- There has been a great deal of activity to support individual providers with claiming and providers are encouraged to use on-line claiming for speed and ease of processing
- There have been improvements in claiming trends with 80% of the May claims current. ACSA has raised member concerns of ongoing delays for some providers prior to the May claims – some dating back years
- DHS also has information available on their website and videos on demand to assist providers with claims and processes

ACAT Assessments

- The Department has been working closely with State and Territory Govt. to improve ACAT assessment processes
- Median wait time for an assessment is currently 11 days. Obviously there are outliers either side of the median and ACSA is interested to hear of any specific areas where there are unreasonable wait times
- High priority consumers should be assessed first and the Department is currently analysing assessment data at a regional level

MAC Service Finders

- There has been an increase in the number of providers completing the service finder information – but many providers have not completed all fields.
- The Department is continuing to encourage providers to complete the service finder info as an opportunity to attract new consumers and referrals, noting that the My Aged Care contact centre uses the service finder to support consumers to search for providers and issue referrals. Based on member feedback ACSA has advised the Department that the information in its current form does not allow consumers to make a true comparison – the service finder requires changes.

Exit Amounts

- The average maximum exit amount is slowly declining and is now \$300
- Only six providers have a maximum exit amount above \$1000

- Where consumers have raised concerns about the exit amount that cannot be resolved locally with the provider, the Department encourages consumers to raise it with the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner.

Portability and Unspent funds

- Complete data is not yet available on the number of consumers that have changed providers – this is because of a 3-month lag in extracting data on entries and exits, which includes the time taken for providers to submit data to DHS. When the data is available, the Department will make it public.
- The Department has had a number of enquiries from providers and peaks about the calculation of unspent funds and issues with delayed DHS payments etc.
- Under the Increasing Choice In Home Care Reform implemented on 27 Feb 2017, it is the providers responsibility to calculate the unspent funds for any consumers that are transferring to another provider or out of Home Care.
- The following link provides the information that may assist members, including [worked examples of the calculations](#)
- The Department provides advice to enquiries from individual providers through its State and Territory Network, based on the legislative requirements. The following are examples of issues and advice provided:
 - The written notice represents the final reconciliation of a client's home care package, where a provider should: account for any remaining claims for home care subsidy (including any periods of leave); ensure that home care fees have been received; and ensure that all expenses have been identified and accounted for in relation to the period (including any expenses from subcontracted or brokered services).
 - Providers are required to calculate the unspent home care amount in relation to the client's period of care, so providers need to wait for any outstanding home care subsidy up to 56 days (after the cessation day) before deciding what their next steps are.
 - Providers should actively work with DHS during the 56-day period to resolve any claims and payment issues as soon as they are identified, to ensure that the reconciliation of the unspent home care amount includes all home care subsidy for the client's period of care.
 - Providers must include monthly advance payments in their calculation of a client's unspent home care amount (ie. paid home care subsidy includes payments received by the provider from both monthly advances and finalised claims).
 - Providers who have not received payment statements from DHS must use their own systems to attribute monthly advance payments received by the

home care service to the care recipient in calculating the unspent home care amount and issuing the written notice.

- These interactions have highlighted the importance of providers being up-to-date and accurate with their claims under the new arrangements, given the requirements, timeframes for notification of consumer exits (within 31 days), and the management of unspent home care amounts (within 70 days).

The following provides clarity about specific questions raised by members about the consumer portion of unspent home care amounts:

Do aged care providers calculate unspent funds as at the time of the calculation? Or some other date eg the cessation date?

- Providers should calculate the unspent home care amount based on the subsidy and fees paid for care/support up to the date of cessation. Any home care fees paid in advance are not included in the calculation of the unspent home care amount and must be separately refunded by the provider and home care subsidy is NOT paid for the client's cessation day.
- The provider must then provide the client with a written notice about their unspent home care amount within 56 days after the agreed cessation day. In order to provide accurate information, it is suggested that the provider calculate the unspent home care amount as close as possible to the 56th day to allow for any delays in payments from DHS (or the consumer) and payment of any outstanding invoices, subcontracting arrangements etc .
- If the provider is aware of any ongoing issues with their DHS claims/payments (and adjustments) they should do what is reasonably within their power to escalate and follow these up so that it is all reconciled within the 56 days specified in the legislation and the information provided to the consumer is accurate.
- Once the provider advises the consumer of their portion of unspent home care amount then that is the amount that should be transferred to the new provider (or consumer or estate depending on circumstances) within 70 days of the cessation date.
- There are a number of scenarios where this process may not occur as smoothly as expected and this is where the dept will look at each case on their merit. If there is a delay in DHS payments which the provider has attempted to follow up and it is through no fault of their own, then they need to provide the details to the consumer as to the amount of unspent funds and why there might be a discrepancy between what appears as unspent home care amount on the monthly statement and what has been calculated based on 'paid' subsidy and fees.

- As required the provider should keep all documentation pertaining to the calculations and any discussion/follow up.

What happens if DHS makes a payment after the time of the calculation (or cessation date)? Does the aged care provider keep all of the payment or is the aged care provider required to recalculate and transfer any further unspent funds?

- The legislation provides for one calculation of unspent funds, notification to consumer (within 56 days of cessation date) and transfer of unspent funds (within 70 days of cessation date).
- In the event that the provider has done all that is within their means to get this calculation as accurate as possible within the 56-day period but there has still been a delay in DHS payments then there is no requirement (within the legislation) for any additional amount paid at a later date by DHS, to be transferred to the new provider/consumer.
- However, there are a number of cases already where providers have made additional payments after the required timeframe for transfer of unspent home care amounts once they have received payments/adjustments from DHS because some of these adjustments have been for significant amounts.
- Providers could develop an internal process that provides guidance for their staff and also provides clarity for consumers.

External Reporting

- ACSA & NACA have worked closely with the Department to develop criteria for external reporting on the new national system for home care. The Department are working with DSS on the functionality, validity and testing of the reports
- The first report is expected to be released in the coming months and will include available data from 27 February to 30 June 2017.
- Quarterly reports are proposed thereafter. The first report will include a number of new and existing indicators on the operation of the home care system. Wherever possible, the data provided through these reports will reflect the previous quarter.
- However, some data on the number of consumers in care (at a point in time) will be delayed by one quarter, as there is a three-month lag in extracting accurate information. This is due to the variability in time taken by providers to submit information on entries and exits to DHS.

FOR FURTHER ADVICE PLEASE CONTACT THE **ACSA MEMBER ADVICE LINE ON 1300 877 855**

Please send your feedback regarding Implementing Choice in Home Care to memberadvice@acsa.asn.au

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Good morning, (Goes with Aug Oct)

Please find attached the ANI Education Calendar for advertising amongst your staff and clientelle as you deem appropriate.

With thanks and have a lovely day.

Regards

Jenny James

Counsellor

Counselling and Education