

Providers fail mandatory aged care demands (Jon Austin, Policy and Communication Officer)

A tough talking watchdog is wrangling providers to care more.....

Aged care providers are getting extra taxpayer's money to deliver more care under government reforms. However, some of them are delivering less care. This has attracted the ire of the aged care watchdog, which has launched a crackdown on providers that are not spending the extra dollars on age care residents, as required under the Federal Governments reforms. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission says 11 providers operating 27 individual residential aged care homes have failed to reach their legally enforceable care minutes targets across successive quarters. The commission has imposed "enforceable undertakings" on those providers, firstly focusing on services in metropolitan cities where surrounding services have much smaller -or no- care minutes shortfalls. An enforceable undertaking is legally binding and sets out agreed action that the provider will take to meet their care minutes requirements. These include the immediate recruitment of more nursing and care staff. The commission can take the provider to court for failing to implement an enforceable undertaking. Sanctions and financial penalties can be imposed. "The commission is being firm and fair with these providers, and we are using our regulatory powers to hold them to account," Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner, Janet Anderson, said. "Failure to deliver mandatory care minutes where there is an absence of tangible effort to achieve these targets could lead to sanctions and financial penalties. "All residential aged care providers are on notice as the commission will continue to actively monitor, engage with and take regulatory action against providers that persistently fail well short of their care minutes requirements." The says that, since 1/10/2023, residential aged care homes have had to deliver mandatory care minutes, increasing to sector average of 215 care minutes per resident per day on 1/10/2024. This includes 44 minutes of registered nurses care.

In October last year, Aged Care Minister Anika Wells, put providers on notice, warning of consequences for noncompliance. In an open letter to providers, she highlighted the importance of staffing levels, describing mandatory care minutes targets as a 'once-in-a-lifetime-change' to improve the quality and safety of care of nursing home residents. "Therefore it's imperative that as an approved provider, you do all you can to ensure that you have the right mix of staff to deliver your required care minutes," she wrote. The letter warned, "The Australian Government expects that you are spending your increased care funding on meeting your mandatory care minutes."

A key initiative of NSA Better Age Care campaign aims to solve that chronic problem by retaining current aged care workers near retirement and recruiting retired workers back into the industry. Older people on the Age Pension would also benefit. Employment income should be exempt from the income test for pensioners working in the care economy (aged, disability, and child care). This will give older workers a greater income and retain more people in the care sector, ensuring care services can be delivered. This would boost workforce participation, helping to meet demand for care workers, especially in the aged care sector. NSA is also calling for an exemption from the aged care assets test for home care recipients when downsizing to more age-appropriate housing.

Key Points:

- Over the past 2 years, aged care funding has increased 58% mostly to providers to deliver more care.
- Some providers have failed to meet mandatory care minutes requirements and the federal watchdog has directed them to comply.

National Seniors

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Catalyst
Foundation

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Branch Diary

Guest speakers

17th Feb. **Catalyst Centre Speaker** (Seniors information Centre)

17th March **Paul Bartlett** **Antiques Valuations**

24th April **Easter Monday No Meeting!!**

19th May **Orange Sky Laundry Presentation**

Modbury NSA is sponsored by the Modbury Plaza Hotel

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