

Media Release

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Acting Inspector-General releases first statutory report on progress in implementing recommendations from Aged Care Royal Commission

Following its tabling in parliament, the Acting Inspector-General of Aged Care (Inspector-General) has published the 2024 Progress Report (the Report) on the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The Report sets out the implementation status of all 148 recommendations as of 1 January 2024, as required by the *Inspector-General of Aged Care Act*. Where practicable, it also records actions and intentions beyond 1 January, including measures announced in the Federal Budget on 14 May 2024. The Report also focuses thematically on ‘access and navigability’ issues, for which some 60 recommendations were considered in closer detail. It seeks to focus attention on the difficulties that people experience accessing the aged care system, including due to the rationing of services, and then navigating to timely and appropriate care within it.

The Inspector-General acknowledges and commends that much has been done to improve the aged care system in the 3 years since the Royal Commission delivered its final report, and that more is underway or planned. However, the report also found that many older Australians continue to experience challenges in understanding and accessing quality aged care.

The Report underscores the need for the government to implement a new, needs-based and demand-driven approach to aged care provision, and a seamless new aged care program, as recommended by the Royal Commission. The Report notes the delayed timetables for the new Act and the Support at Home program to come into effect and emphasises the critical importance of there being no further delays. In the meantime, urgent attention is needed to fund a sufficient supply of Commonwealth Home Support services and Home Care Packages in response to unmet need and long waiting times.

The attachment to this release presents a summary of the Report’s key messages and the Inspector-General’s specific observations. In summary, they call on government to:

- introduce a more seamless, demand-driven aged care system, which together with a rights-based legislative framework would deliver the transformation of the aged care system that was recommended by the Royal Commissioners
- improve people’s understanding of aged care to ensure they can readily access it when needed
- ensure the system delivers high-quality, enablement-focused care to all
- ensure sustainable provision of care that meets people’s preferences and diverse situations
- improve integration between the healthcare and aged care systems.

The key messages of the access and navigability report fall into the following areas (chapters):

1. Access and navigability – the system architecture
2. New Aged Care Act and system redesign
3. Improving information, navigability and access pathways
4. Initiatives to support access
5. Ensuring an appropriate and secure workforce
6. Improving access to health care and allied health care
7. Improved access to respite

8. Improving dementia support
9. Improving access for First Nations peoples
10. Designing for diversity in aged care
11. Improving access in regional, rural and remote communities

The Conclusion to the report sets out suggested government priorities for the next 6 months.

The report calls for more whole-of-system reform planning, engagement and communication, in addition to initiative-specific activities. This includes building sector confidence by placing a higher priority on ensuring providers have sufficient time to plan for change and that reforms are appropriately sequenced. And it includes monitoring and reviewing instances, such as cited in the Report, where the design or implementation of one program impacts adversely on the goals of another, and where this is working to reduce access to or the provision of holistic quality care. The Inspector-General outlines the need for government to consider whether individual elements of the reform agenda are working optimally together, with a view to increasing complementarity and resolving conflicts.

In preparing the report, the Inspector-General and the Office undertook extensive stakeholder consultation and sought input from Commonwealth agencies that have a role in the administration, governance, and regulation of aged care. The Office consulted with consumer and provider peak organisations, other key stakeholders in the aged care sector, and importantly, members of the public with lived experience of aged care.

The attached Summary Report and the full 2024 Progress Report, are available on the Inspector-General of Aged Care's website, igac.gov.au

For any questions, or to interview the Acting Inspector-General, Ian Yates AM, please contact Media@igac.gov.au.