

## **Private Submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs Re: Inquiry into Provisions of Other Legislation to Support the New Aged Care Act**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As an older Australian, self-funded retiree, and aged care advocate for an organisation that will remain nameless, I am deeply invested in the future of aged care, not only as someone who may one day rely on its services, but as a strong proponent of innovation that enhances wellbeing and independence.

I am particularly passionate about the role that robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) can play in transforming aged care delivery. These technologies are already being trialled in Australia and internationally to support mobility, medication management, companionship, and monitoring.

However, their integration into aged care raises critical questions around privacy, ethics, safety, and workforce impact. These concerns must be addressed proactively to ensure that technological advancement does not come at the expense of dignity, autonomy, or human connection.

The Senate's Inquiry into other legislation supporting the new Aged Care Act presents a rare and strategic opportunity to shape a legislative framework that is not only fit for purpose today but resilient to the challenges and possibilities of tomorrow.

The absence of formal Terms of Reference opens the door to forward-looking considerations, including the ethical and operational implications of emerging technologies.

This submission is offered in the spirit of constructive foresight; to help future-proof the Aged Care Act and ensure it reflects both the promise and the responsibility of innovation.

### **COMMENT**

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important inquiry. The broad scope of the Inquiry allows for the inclusion of emerging technologies and the complex challenges they pose.

Robotics and AI are no longer speculative—they are active components of aged care trials around the world. Their potential to improve quality of life is significant, but so too are the risks if they are deployed without adequate safeguards.

Australia has the opportunity to lead globally in ethical, inclusive, and visionary aged care. By embedding provisions that anticipate and regulate the use of robotics and AI, we can ensure that the new Aged Care Act is robust, responsive, and respectful of the diverse needs of older Australians.

In shaping Australia's future of aged care, we must look beyond immediate reforms and embrace the horizon of possibility. Robotics and AI are not distant concepts—they are already entering our care environments, bringing both promise and complexity. This Inquiry offers a rare chance to embed foresight into legislation, ensuring that innovation serves humanity, not the other way around.

I urge the Committee to seize this moment to craft a legislative framework that is visionary, ethical, and inclusive.

It is submitted that consideration be given to the following recommendations to ensure that the new Aged Care Act is not only a response to today's needs, but also a safeguard for tomorrow's challenges—where technology uplifts, protects, and respects the dignity of every older person.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations have been informed by research conducted with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) and reflect a commitment to ethical innovation and inclusive design.

1. **Embed Future-Proofing Mechanisms** Introduce provisions for periodic review and amendment of the Aged Care Act to respond to emerging technologies. This ensures the legislation remains relevant and adaptive.
2. **Establish Ethical and Safety Standards for AI and Robotics** Mandate the development of national standards governing the use of AI and robotics in aged care. These standards should safeguard privacy, autonomy, and human dignity, ensuring that technology complements—not replaces—human care.
3. **Address Workforce Impacts** Recognise the potential for automation to reshape the aged care workforce. Include provisions for workforce transition, training, and protections against displacement, ensuring that technology enhances rather than undermines care roles.
4. **Ensure Transparency and Accountability** Introduce mechanisms for oversight, including mandatory reporting of adverse events involving AI or robotic systems, and clear pathways for redress in cases of harm or malfunction.
5. **Promote Inclusive and Accessible Design** Require that any technology deployed in aged care be designed with the cognitive, physical, and emotional needs of older adults in mind. Legislation should mandate user testing and accessibility standards to prevent exclusion or harm.

Respectfully submitted by:

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