

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

3.6 The committee recommends the establishment of a national aged care forum, reporting directly to the Minister for Health and Ageing and coordinated by the Department of Health and Ageing, to consider, on an on-going basis, current and future challenges to the aged care sector.

Recommendation 2

3.7 The committee recommends that the national aged care forum establish a taskforce (or equivalent body) representative of all involved aged care stakeholders including clients to action and where possible implement determinations of the national forum.

Recommendation 3

3.12 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing, in cooperation with the suggested taskforce and in partnership with all involved stakeholders including clients, undertake an all-encompassing review of the *Aged Care Act 1997* and related regulations. The review should:

- equally examine the provision of residential and community aged care services in Australia with consideration of both current and future challenges in the provision of aged care services;
- provide future projections to enable both short and longer-term sectoral planning.

Recommendation 4

3.24 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing in association with the suggested taskforce and in consultation with all aged care stakeholders including clients undertake analysis to establish benchmark of care costs.

Recommendation 5

3.30 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing recommence publication of Audited General Purpose Financial Reports as soon practicable and continue to publish such reports annually as a matter of course.

Recommendation 6

3.31 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing review the Audited General Purpose Financial Reports with an aim to identifying any necessary reporting changes to ensure that the information available provides a clear and comparative understanding of provider performance.

Recommendation 7

3.39 The committee recommends the establishment of a nationally consistent methodological approach to data gathering and research on the financial status of the residential and community aged care sector. Towards this goal, the committee recommends the establishment of a roundtable of key stakeholders engaged in such research and facilitated by the Department of Health and Ageing to discuss and agree upon common indicators and definitions to enable comparative analysis.

Recommendation 8

3.44 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing in association with the suggested taskforce (or equivalent body) and in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare review and address deficiencies in information in the aged care sector.

Recommendation 9

4.59 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing undertake a 'stress test' of the aged care sector in order to measure the sector's financial wellbeing.

Recommendation 10

4.78 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing, in association with the suggested taskforce, undertake a review:

- to identify the costs and resources required to meet new regulation, accreditation and compliance measures with a view to rationalising the administrative processes as required; and
- to identify more cost effective means of meeting the requirements of the compliance framework.

Recommendation 11

4.79 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing implement measures, including additional funding, to assist smaller providers to meet the requirements of the compliance framework.

Recommendation 12

4.98 The committee recommends that the issue of professional nursing and other aged care staffing requirements be considered in the overarching review of the aged care sector.

Recommendation 13

4.113 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing, in association with the suggested taskforce, review aged care staffing challenges and

identify methods of address, with particular focus on staffing requirements in rural and remote areas.

Recommendation 14

5.49 The committee recommends that the taskforce undertake a review of the indexation formula used for the aged care sector in order to identify its adequacy in relation to costs faced by the sector and to identify modifications to the formula if required.

5.50 The committee further recommends that consideration be given to an independent mechanism to continually assess the indexation formula.

Recommendation 15

6.40 The committee recommends that the all-encompassing review specifically consider the provision of aged care services in rural and remote areas and the effectiveness of the current viability supplement to support service provision.

Recommendation 16

6.43 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth and Norfolk Island Government initiate discussions in relation to a proposal to develop homecare services on Norfolk Island.

Recommendation 17

6.48 The committee recommends that the all-encompassing review specifically consider and address the expectations and needs of persons from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Recommendation 18

6.60 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing conduct a review into the implications of 'elderly homeless' incorporated as a special needs category under the *Aged Care Act 1997*.

Recommendation 19

6.61 The committee recommends that the suggested all-encompassing aged care review specifically consider and address the expectations and needs of the homeless and other socio-economically disadvantaged persons.

Recommendation 20

6.71 The committee recommends that the suggested all-encompassing aged care review specifically consider and address the expectations and needs of elderly Indigenous Australians and their communities.

Recommendation 21

6.72 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing consider further initiatives to attract culturally-appropriate staff in consultation with involved stakeholders including Indigenous clients.

Recommendation 22

7.44 The committee recommends that the Australian Government implement the recommendation of the 2007 National Review of Aged Care Assessment Teams and review the legislative requirement for re-assessment of those residents:

- moving from low to high care within an aged care complex where the low and high care facilities have separate provider numbers;
- entering an aged care facility with a low care approval but who require high care.

Recommendation 23

7.51 In light of disparities in information regarding the Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessments and re-assessments between the Department of Health and Ageing and involved providers, the committee recommends that the department launch an information campaign on recent reforms to the ACAT.

Recommendation 24

7.60 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing review methods directed to affirming the ACAT as a single nationally consistent program which genuinely serves as a single entry point to aged care services. The review should entail dialogue with aged care clients and providers as well as liaison with state and territory health departments.

Recommendation 25

7.61 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing conduct a national education campaign directed at new and potential aged care clients to raise awareness of the aged care services available to them including the role of ACAT and of their rights and entitlements in relation to such services.

Recommendation 26

7.94 The committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing analyse decoupling of residential care and accommodation. Such a review should consider and assess the views, concerns and recommendations of involved stakeholders including the Productivity Commission.

Recommendation 27

7.112 The committee recommends that the Australian Government expand community aged care funding and services to meet growing demand and expected quality service provision outcomes.

Recommendation 28

7.122 The committee recommends that the all-encompassing review of the residential and community aged care sector take a client-based approach in order to ensure that its findings are client focused.

Recommendation 29

7.129 The committee recommends that the all-encompassing review of the aged care sector consider options to enable greater flexibility in relation to payments and services directed at providing a client-centred aged care system for Australia.

Recommendation 30

8.43 The committee recommends that the suggested taskforce undertake a review of the current planning ratio for community, high- and low-care places. Drawing on all available demographic and social information, the review is an opportunity to assess the planning ratio in light of growing and diverse demand on aged care services.

Recommendation 31

8.44 The committee recommends that the suggested taskforce review continuity of care as a potential long term solution for the aged care sector.