

# Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care

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- Aged Care Reform in Australia – a Brief Overview
- Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
- Post Royal Commission implementation measures
- Establishment of Inspector-General of Aged Care
- Oversight Strategy and Core Functions of the Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care
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# Aged Care Reform in Australia

Aged Care for many decades the “**poor cousin**” of the **health and social services systems** in Australia

Since 1960s **predominantly government funded** but limited regulation for decades and **divided responsibilities** across federal and state governments. Both residential and home care places **provided on a rationed basis (ratios)**

1980s saw **introduction of a major Federal/State home care funding program**

1997 Federal government **reforms increased and systematized funding**, introduced external standards and a **regulator** over providers accreditation

Next decade plus despite many reviews and reports largely only **small and piecemeal changes**

2010 Federal government commissioned a **Productivity Commission Inquiry into Caring for Older Australians** – reported June 2011 with major reform proposals

# Aged Care Reform in Australia / 2

## 2013 Federal government reform package ‘Living Longer. Living Better’ (LLLB)

- increased number and range of home care packages - with “Consumer Directed Care” - from 60,000 to 140,000 over 10 years
- centralized “Gateway” to aged care system (My Aged Care)
- development of initial Quality Indicators for residential care
- stronger means testing and consumer contributions (in principle) especially for accommodation costs, and extra government funding

## 2017 reform ‘Choice and Control’

- saw Home Care Packages allocated to older people directly – not providers
- this created national waiting list – highlighted long wait times

## 2017 Legislated Review of LLLB reforms

- made 38 major recommendations to improve consumer access and navigation, single assessment service, means testing, workforce development and more
- limited adoption 2018 Budget

# Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

Following media reports of **significant abuse and poor quality**, new Prime Minister announced in **September 2018** a **Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety** that ran from **October 2018 to March 2021**.

Extensive exercise involving **public consultations, commissioned research, extensive hearings, roundtables and many hundreds of submissions**

**2019 Interim Report titled 'Neglect'** as experience of too many consumers and attitude of many providers and governments



## Final Report March 2021 contained 148 recommendations covering:

- a new integrated aged care program
- new “rights based” Act
- substantially increased funding
- mandatory nursing and care staff hours and higher wages
- stronger powers and functions for the Regulator
- much better integration of health and aged care systems
- more support for consumers in navigation and advocacy
- greater transparency – financial and quality
- an independent pricing authority
- star ratings for providers
- more quality indicators
- stronger governance requirements
- strengthened quality and prudential standards
- and more ...

# Since the Royal Commission

Major funding, legislative and policy responses by Coalition government in 2021 and 2022, and more by new Labor government in 2022 and 2023 and continuing. Highlights of the combined measures include:

Huge **growth in Home Care Packages (HCP)** continued (in 2013 there were 60,000 - by late 2023 there are 278,000 !!). More HCPs than residential care places.

**Increased funding for residential care**, and a restructured funding system, with an **Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority** advising Government on pricing.

Funding for a **significant uplift in wages of nurses and carers in aged care**, and for an increase in frontline care time and **minimum 24/7 nursing**.

Implementation of a **Star Rating system**, initially for residential aged care providers, using resident experience surveys and quality, compliance and workforce data.

# Since the Royal Commission / 2

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Introduction of a **Serious Incident Response Scheme** administered by the regulator

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A **doubling of consumer advocacy services** and introduction of a **program to provide people with Care Finders** to assist access and navigation

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Introduction of **required standards for governance bodies of providers** regarding independence, clinical input and legal responsibility for quality of care

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A **new Aged Care Act** that sets out a statement of rights for people receiving services and principles on which aged care is to be based

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A new **single “support at home” program** (there are currently two major and several others) – although implementation has now been twice deferred

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Allocation of **residential places to the older person**, not the provider, as in Home Care Packages

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**Strengthened powers and responsibilities** for the regulator

# Since the Royal Commission / 3

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Much **stronger regulation restricting the use of physical and chemical restraints**

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A wide range of **measures targeting better care for people with dementia, First Nations aged care, rural and remote aged care, more broadly available palliative and end of life care, better access to primary care, and more.**

- Overall, across two governments this is a **comprehensive response to most of the Royal Commission recommendations**, with funding at levels never before experienced.
- Many **recommendations had been ‘in the wings’** or previously proposed, or even agreed, but the **Royal Commission gave them stature and momentum.**
- **But how do we know effort will be maintained over the rest of the reform journey?**



# Inspector General of Aged Care

**Royal Commission** – two key recommendations about the establishment and functions of the Inspector-General

**Taskforce** to establish the Inspector-General of Aged Care commenced in **early 2022**

**Interim Office** created **January 2023**

**New Act to establish the Inspector-General** (and supporting office) passed **August 2023**

**Role and functions** of the Inspector-General include to **monitor, investigate and report to Minister and Parliament** on the:

- *implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission*
- performance of duties under aged care laws
- administration of aged care laws and funding
- operation of any aged care law
- oversight of the complaints management process across aged care
- systemic issues in aged care

The Inspector General has **substantial powers**

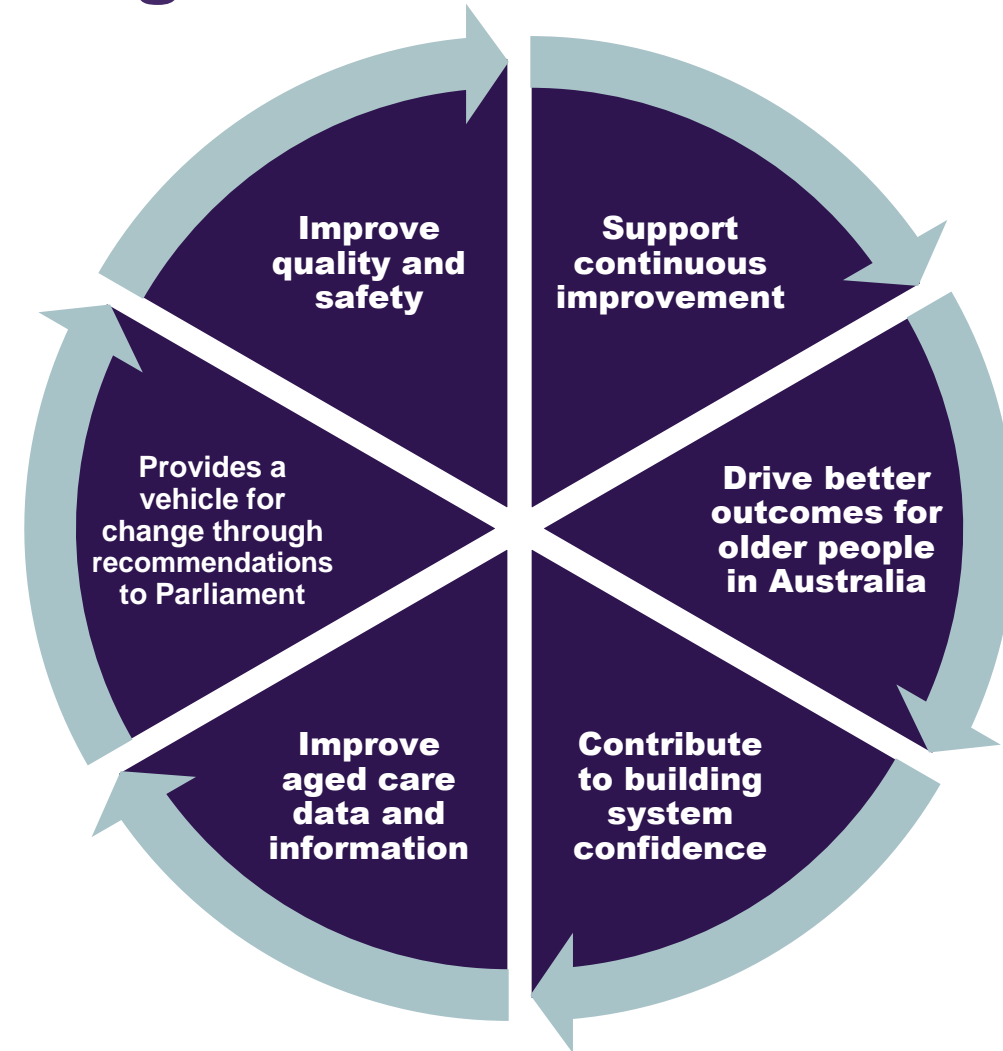
# Officially Established – 16 October 2023

## Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care

Our independent oversight helps transform the aged care system to better meet the diverse needs of older people in Australia.

# Why an Inspector-General of Aged Care?

- A recommendation by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
- An important component providing oversight of the new aged care system
- Presents an opportunity to help drive a robust, accountable and transparent aged care system for older people in Australia
- Will help drive positive change in the sector
- Will report on and evaluate Royal Commission reform implementation





# The Inspector-General of Aged Care

oversees



## Government & Government Funded

### Bodies

Department of Health  
and Aged Care

Independent Health and  
Aged Care Pricing  
Authority

Aged Care Quality and  
Safety Commission

These bodies have different responsibilities to price, fund and administer programs and services through providers they also regulate to deliver outcomes for:



## Older People and their families



# Oversight Role

The Inspector-General of Aged Care provides independent oversight of the aged care system



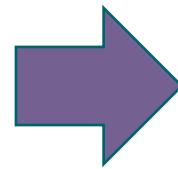
**We monitor, review, and report on systemic issues and administrative actions of bodies responsible for the administration, regulation, and funding of Commonwealth aged care services, including:**

- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority

**Our oversight role will drive greater accountability and transparency across the aged care system.**

# Monitoring

Investigating the state of the aged care system using data, intelligence, and evidence



# Reviews

## What is an in-depth review?

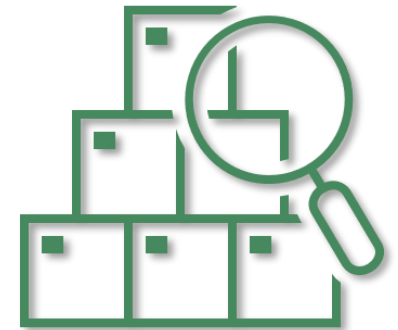
- a **detailed examination of an issue** or area of weakness in the aged care system
- focuses on **systemic issues** in the aged care system

## Systemic issues

- cannot be singularly defined – more than a single or isolated issue
- serious and ongoing problems associated with the design and operation of the aged care system.
- persistent, complex, interconnected and require a concerted effort to fix

## In-depth reviews will:

- provide a **catalyst for real change** in the delivery of aged care
- help to **pin-point what is causing deficiencies** in the sector by examining issues thoroughly
- enable us to publicly identify any weaknesses and push for their resolution



# Reports

The Inspector-General will produce the following **reports**:

**Review reports** will involve the examination and evaluation of systemic issues, culminating in a report with findings and recommendations to address those issues

**Royal Commission Reports** will provide updates on the implementation of reforms in response to Royal Commission recommendations

**Standalone reports** on the aged care system on key areas of interest such as the performance of Commonwealth-funded agencies, aspects of the operation of any aged care law, adequacy of aged care data, and how well the aged care system is meeting the objects of aged care legislation





# Oversight of complaints management

The Inspector-General also **monitors the way that complaints processes in the aged care system** are managed by:

- government agencies
- approved providers
- other aged care bodies funded or regulated by the Australian Government.

We look at **how** they manage their complaints and **recommend ways to improve** their complaints processes to ensure complaints management processes in aged care are:

- fit for purpose, effective, efficient, and accessible
- delivering appropriate outcomes.



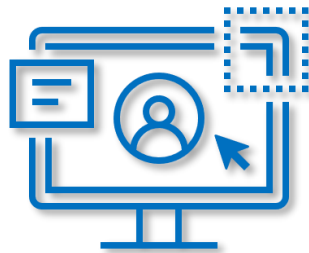
**The Inspector-General does not have any role in investigating individual complaints about aged care, that is the responsibility of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.**

# Inform and Engage



Engage and consult to help inform the activities of the Inspector-General

Ensure that the Annual Work Plan is informed by people with lived experience of aged care, their families and carers, and industry experts



Raise awareness of the Inspector-General's roles, responsibilities and priorities

Work together with the sector to build a better understanding of the aged care system

Inform government and community about the weaknesses and successes in the aged care sector to help drive positive change

# Summary

## *The journey through aged care reform and regulation*

- Inspector-General of Aged Care will have a real impact in facilitating positive transformation of the aged care system, building on the reform momentum of the responses to the Royal Commission
- Identify what's working well and promote replication of innovative solutions
- Address longstanding, pervasive issues
- Highlight areas of excellence and achievements across the sector
- Help to drive continuous improvement and best practice
- Collaborative – working together is critical to improving the system



# *Questions?*

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