



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

**Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Indigenous Health
Member for Hasluck**

MEDIA RELEASE

1 November 2017

New aged care workforce taskforce to focus on safety and quality

The Turnbull Government today announced an expert taskforce to develop a wide-ranging workforce strategy, focused on supporting safe, quality aged care for senior Australians.

The Minister for Aged Care, Ken Wyatt AM, said the work of the taskforce would be inclusive, with exhaustive national consultation.

“Everything is on the table but there are only two things that matter, safety and quality,” Minister Wyatt said.

“The Taskforce will reach out to senior Australians and their families, consumer organisations, informal carers, aged care workers and volunteers.

“It will also consult with many others including unions, health professionals, universities and the health, education, employment and disability sectors.”

The Taskforce will be led by Professor John Pollaers and will reference the June 2017 report of the Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry into the future of the aged care sector workforce, the workforce-related observations in the government commissioned *Legislated Review of Aged Care 2017* and the recently released *Review of National Aged Care Quality Regulatory Processes*.

“The Taskforce will explore short, medium and longer term options to boost supply, address demand and improve productivity for the aged care workforce,” said Minister Wyatt.

“With Australia’s current aged care staffing needs predicted to grow from around 360,000 currently to almost one million by 2050, workforce issues are vital to the quality ongoing care of older Australians.”

Minister Wyatt said he wanted Australians to realise that aged care careers are a professional pathway to employment for life.

“Under Professor Pollaers’ leadership, the role of the Taskforce will be to consider new thinking and to encourage the incredible opportunities working in aged care,” the Minister said.

“Professor Pollaers brings a strong combination of business leadership skills and international experience to the table including participation in industry innovation, with a focus on education, training and skills development.

“The Taskforce is comprised of people with a broad range of experience, both within and outside the aged care sector.”

Professor Pollaers said that the taskforce would concentrate on the imperatives that drive current and projected workforce needs.

“Aged care is an industry that matters, and our work will be underpinned by a fundamental understanding of the needs of the consumer now and into the future,” Professor Pollaers said.

The Taskforce will oversee and sponsor a combination of working summits, public submission processes, technical and specialist groups to inform its work.

It is scheduled to report to the Minister by 30 June 2018.

Media contact: Kay McNiece, 0412 132 585

Taskforce membership:

Chair - Professor John POLLAERS
Dr Michele BRUNIGES – Secretary, Department of Education and Training, Australian Government
Dr Penny FLETT – Pro Vice Chancellor University of Western Australia
Dr Stephen JUDD – CEO Hammondcare
Professor Linda KRISTJANSON – Vice-Chancellor Swinburne University
Alan LILLY – Chief Executive, Blue Cross
Professor Andrew ROBINSON – Co-Director of Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, Tasmania, and Director Dementia Training Australia
Catherine RULE – Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of Health, Australian Government
Tim SHACKLETON – Chief Executive Officer, Rural Health West
Pat SPARROW – Chief Executive Officer, Aged & Community Services Australia
Dr Adrian TURNER – CEO, Data61, CSIRO
Ian YATES – Chief Executive, Council on the Ageing

Taskforce Terms of Reference:

The taskforce will develop a strategy for growing and sustaining the workforce providing aged care services and support for older people, to meet their care needs in a variety of settings across Australia.

The taskforce will place particular emphasis on:

- Workforce planning covering workforce size and structure, managing growth and changes in service requirements, mix of occupations, workforce roles and distinct workforce needs in different care settings and market catchments.
- Supply and retention of the right workers with the right aptitudes in the right locations, and securing and sustaining up-to-date skills.
- The capacity of providers as employers, and the role of sector leadership, to equip the workforce to meet service requirements, needs and expectations of quality of care and services.
- Building sector-wide capabilities to innovate and extend new ways of working tailored to the needs of the older people who use aged care services, their families, carers and communities.

In undertaking its work, the taskforce will be expected to:

- Assess trends, emerging issues and potential scenarios relevant to the current and future workforce.
- Cover the entire aged care workforce engaged in providing care and services, including support staff, contracted services and volunteers.
- Work in the context of aged care system policy settings, integrity, consumer safeguards and funding.
- Consider wider government policy settings of relevance to the workforce.
- Have regard to recent submissions to and reports of relevant inquiries on aged care workforce matters, and government responses.
- Engage and consult widely to ensure all points of view are heard and considered.
- Integrate in its work an inclusive and responsive workforce to support the diverse needs of older people.
- Ensure coverage of regional, rural, remote and very remote workforce issues.
- Consider cross-sectoral challenges and opportunities, particularly with the health, disability, education and employment sectors.
- Incorporate short term, medium term and longer term actions as part of a sustainable strategy.