

# Draft National Aged Care Advocacy Framework

## 1. Purpose of the National Aged Care Advocacy Framework

### Overall Aim

The aim of the National Aged Care Advocacy Framework (the Framework) is to guide the provision of individual advocacy services delivered through the National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP), funded by the Department of Health (the Department). The Framework will set the key principles, priorities and outcomes that will enable NACAP providers to deliver effective and high quality aged care advocacy services and provide support to NACAP providers to achieve a nationally consistent approach.

### Policy Considerations

While supporting a nationally consistent approach to aged care advocacy services, the Framework will allow for flexibility and individualised approaches ensuring that older people with diverse needs or at risk populations can be appropriately and sufficiently supported, as well as meeting localised needs in service provision.

The Framework will be used by NACAP providers in conjunction with a number of other key program documents, including:

- National Aged Care Advocacy Program Guidelines;
- Funding Agreement with NACAP providers; and
- *The Aged Care Act 1997*, including the *Grant Principles 2014*.

A range of support services are required to ensure that aged care consumers can effectively interact with the aged care system as it moves towards a consumer-driven market-based system providing consumers with increased choice and control in how they access the care they need. It is recognised that individual advocacy support forms a critical element of a broader suite of consumer support.

With ongoing changes to the aged care system having a significant impact on how consumers access and receive services, individual advocacy will also play an important role in capturing consumer experiences and perspectives. This will provide valuable insight to inform consideration of what ongoing support consumers will need.

As the aged care system moves in the direction of providing increased choice, it is acknowledged that much can be learned from the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). With that in mind, it has been identified that harnessing opportunities to align NACAP with the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP) presents opportunities to strengthen networks, create synergies and improve interaction across the programs to maximise efficiencies. This includes looking at aligning this Framework with the National Disability Advocacy Framework, where appropriate.

## 2. Design and development of the Framework

### Review of Commonwealth aged care advocacy services

This document outlines the development process and proposed content for the Framework based on the outcomes of the review of the Commonwealth Aged Care Advocacy Services (the review) undertaken by the Department in 2015. A copy of the review's final report can be found at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

### Collaboration with NACAP providers

The Department acknowledges the importance of a collaborative approach in the development of the Framework and will work directly with advocacy providers and key stakeholders to develop and finalise all aspects of the Framework following the open funding round. It is intended that NACAP providers take a leading role in the development of the Framework and in determining the most effective models for service delivery.

## Expectation of NACAP Providers

Advocacy providers funded to deliver NACAP services will agree to adopt and embed the Framework within their advocacy services once it has been finalised.

## Ongoing Review

The Framework is intended to be a living document and will be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the life of the program. This will ensure it remains dynamic, relevant and appropriate within the context of changes to the aged care system and emerging consumer needs.

## 3. National Aged Care Advocacy Program

The NACAP provides free, independent, confidential advocacy support to older people who are suffering frailty or disability and receiving or seeking to receive Commonwealth-funded aged care services, including their families or representatives.

The aims and objectives are to ensure older people:

- can effectively interact with the aged care system;
- better transition between service types;
- be enabled and empowered to apply informed decision making to exercise their right to choice in accessing and receiving care;
- have their rights better understood, recognised and upheld;
- have their needs more optimally met due to the intervention of advocacy support;
- are better informed about the care options available to them;
- are supported with information and advice about their care rights and responsibilities; and
- are supported to address issues that impact their ability to live in their own homes, with the aim of preventing premature admission to aged care facilities.

For the purpose of the NACAP, Commonwealth-funded aged care services are defined as:

- Residential aged care;
- Home Care Packages; and
- Commonwealth Home Support Services.

Older people receiving or seeking to receive the following other Commonwealth-funded aged care services are also eligible to receive advocacy support through NACAP. These include:

- Commonwealth Continuity of Support (CoS) Programme;
- Dementia Services, funded through the Dementia and Aged Care Services Fund (DACs);
- Multi-Purpose Services;
- Flexible Care Services, including National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program;
- Transition Care; and
- Short Term Restorative Care.

## 4. Content of the Framework

The Framework will complement program level requirements set out in the NACAP Program Guidelines and NACAP funding agreements. The proposed content includes:

- ***NACAP guiding principles and priorities*** – Agreed principles and priorities should have a focus on empowering consumers to exercise increased choice and control while having their rights protected.

The review identified a comprehensive list of guiding principles and priorities which were largely agreed by stakeholders who participated in the review process. As part of the development of the Framework these principles and priorities will be reviewed and NACAP providers agreed to those that are most appropriate.

- **NACAP outcomes and mechanism for measurement** – Agreed outcomes should ensure a nationally consistent, quality and consumer focussed advocacy program, which aims to achieve a range of consumer focussed outcomes.

The review identified a range of outcomes and potential mechanisms for measurement. As part of the design and development of the Framework, NACAP providers will work together to agree on outcomes that are achievable and identify the most effective mechanisms of measuring client outcomes. These mechanisms will then be incorporated into the agreed reporting and quality assurance processes.

It should be noted that outcome-based reporting will be further supported by the ongoing collection of output data in relation to measuring service outcomes and in identifying the level of services being provided. This will support the periodic analysis of the program and inform service trends.

- **Services, scope and eligibility** – The aims and objectives of the NACAP will be met through the delivery of the following program activities:
  - independent and individually focussed advocacy support;
  - the provision of information to support eligible older people;
  - the delivery of education sessions promoting aged care consumer rights to eligible older people; and
  - the delivery of education sessions to aged care providers promoting consumer rights and aged care provider responsibilities, including through online/digital systems.

Advocacy services will be available to older people suffering frailty or disability who are receiving or seeking to receiving Commonwealth-funded aged care services, including their families or representatives. Target groups with a particular focus include those who are mentioned above and identify as being from a special needs group as defined under the *Aged Care Act 1997* or people living with dementia.

The Framework should aim to include additional information to support a number of operational elements to be adopted by NACAP providers within their service delivery model.

It is acknowledged that consumers of Home Care Packages and Commonwealth Home Support services may seek support for issues outside aged care services that may affect their ability to continue living in their own homes. These may include issues related to: access to health care, transport, housing/tenancy, elder abuse, and financial issues.

In respect to the role of the NACAP in relation to these broader consumers issues, NACAP providers will be required to develop and maintain strong networks of referral opportunities so that consumer issues can be addressed by those with the requisite expertise, and to avoid the advocate's role from becoming that of a case manager. This will allow advocacy services to ensure consumers receive holistic support services that are consumer-led.

- **NACAP target groups** – The NACAP Program Guidelines set out the range of specific target groups that will have a focus within the NACAP. The Framework should include additional information and agreed service delivery strategies and models for meeting the needs of older people from special needs groups as defined under the *Aged Care Act 1997*, people living with dementia and at risk populations. It should be noted that as part of the Framework development, additional target groups and definitions on at risk populations may need to be identified.

Through the development of the Framework, NACAP providers will discuss and agree on a number of strategies that will ensure advocacy service delivery is appropriate for the full range of target groups, while allowing for flexibility to meet localised needs. A number of strategies were identified through the review that can be further considered.

Special needs groups are defined in the *Aged Care Act 1997* as:

- a) people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
- b) people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- c) people who live in rural or remote areas;

- d) people who are financially or socially disadvantaged;
- e) veterans;
- f) people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- g) care-leavers\*;
- h) parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal;
- i) lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people; and
- j) people of a kind (if any) specified in the Allocation Principles.

\* including Forgotten Australians, Former Child Migrants and Stolen Generations.

In identifying these strategies consideration should be given to the diverse circumstances, needs and specific barriers faced by each target group.

To support effective engagement and maximise service delivery to people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, the Department will be funding access to Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) by NACAP providers.

- ***Mechanisms for maximising service reach*** – The development of the Framework will consider a focus on reaching those living in rural and remote areas and the potential use of digital platforms.

In developing the Framework NACAP providers will have the opportunity to share ideas for innovative technologies and alternate models that may improve access to services.

- ***A coordinated approach – key interactions, partnerships and interfaces with NACAP providers and other services*** – Within the NACAP Program Guidelines, NACAP providers will be required to identify how they will establish and maintain effective interactions, networks and partnerships with a range of agencies and services, including but not limited to:

- Other funded NACAP providers
- Funded providers of the NDAP
- The Aged Care Complaints Scheme (ACCS)
- My Aged Care Contact Centre
- My Aged Care face-to-face assessment organisations, including:
  - Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs); and
  - Regional Assessment Services (RAS).
- Organisations representing aged care consumers from special needs groups, including organisations supporting aged care consumers in rural and remote areas.

The review noted the importance of NACAP providers working together to ensure a coordinated network is built to facilitate a forum for sharing information, resources and learnings, as well as facilitating effective feedback to Government around systemic issues and trends. Through the development of this Framework, NACAP providers should consider and agree on effective processes to ensure this is achieved.

The Department will also play a role in ensuring NACAP providers are able to build direct relationships with a range of areas within the Department and linkages to other relevant parts of the Commonwealth.

An approach for connecting with local stakeholders and service providers to optimise appropriate referral pathways, particularly for special needs groups should also be considered.

This section of the Framework will also include clearly articulated processes for interaction with the ACCS to ensure nationally consistent interaction is achieved across jurisdictions. Also noting the ACCS now falls within the responsibility of the Aged Care Commissioner, there is an opportunity to strengthen the interface between the ACCS and advocacy services for more effective referral processes.

- *Reporting processes and definitions for outcome and output reporting*

It was noted through the review that the previous NACAP data collection was focussed primarily on outputs and collection was inconsistent across jurisdictions. The Framework will provide additional information and guidance to NACAP providers around the reporting processes and definitions of data collection to ensure a nationally consistent approach.

It is recognised that outcome and output data collected by NACAP providers is a valuable means for the Department to understand the aged care experiences of consumers, as well as service trends.

While output data will continue to be collected, future reporting should be more outcomes focussed to ensure the information gathered is meaningful and usable.

NACAP providers will have the opportunity to work with the Department, including the Home Care Packages and Commonwealth Home Support policy areas to identify what can be captured so that the data can be used effectively by policy makers.

*Quality assurance and improvement processes* – The development of the Framework will consider continuous quality improvements and should include a range of quality assurance and improvement processes agreed to by NACAP providers. These may include:

- Advocacy workforce development and competencies to support recruitment, professional development and training. These should have a focus on ensuring advocates have the skills to deliver culturally appropriate, effective and respectful advocacy support. Suggested models may include competencies developed by Advocacy Tasmania and/or those used in previous NACAP Program Guidelines;
- Use of outcome reporting to facilitate ongoing monitoring of service delivery and continuous improvement within services, such as client feedback processes; and
- A consistent internal complaints process.

*Service Promotion / Communication Strategy* – The review identified a range of ideas and options to maximise opportunities to promote and raise awareness of the NACAP and advocacy support in general. The Department will play a key role in working with NACAP providers to develop a communication strategy. The strategy will form part of the Framework and clearly articulate the role of Government and that of NACAP providers in supporting the promotion of advocacy services.