Consultation Paper to inform development of the Aged Care Diversity Framework

# Developing an Aged Care Diversity Framework

The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health, has asked the Department of Health (the department) to co-design an Aged Care Diversity Framework (the Framework) by December 2017. To inform development of the Framework the Minister has established an Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group (Diversity Sub-Group).

Older people display the same diversity as the broader population across one or more attributes including race, religion, language, gender, sexuality, health, economic status and/or geographic location. The Framework will need to reflect this reality, including recognition that a single person may be a part of multiple diversity groups. This diversity and intersectionality means that it is difficult to determine the total number of older people that will be covered by the Framework, however the available information shows that[[1]](#footnote-1):

* Almost one third of older Australians were born outside of Australia and one in five older Australians are from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds;
* There are over 100,000 older people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities’ in

Australia;

* More than one in ten people have diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex

characteristics;

* Almost 15,000 older Australians experience homelessness or are at risk of homelessness;
* One in ten Australians over sixty-five lives with cognitive impairment and dementia;
* More than 80% of older Australians report an affiliation to a religion of some kind;
* Over half of older Australians experience some sort of disability;
* More than one in ten older Australians live in regional, rural and remote communities;
* One in twelve older Australians experience significant financial or social disadvantage;
* One in twelve older Australians have four or more chronic diseases;
* There are over 150,000 older Australian veterans; and
* There are half a million care leavers in Australia who are now between 40 and 90 years of age, with the numbers of parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal still unknown.

The Framework will be relevant for all older people and will focus on acknowledging individuals’ diverse characteristics and life experiences.

The purpose of this paper is to seek input and feedback from a variety of stakeholders to inform early developmental work on the Framework. This includes all older people and their carers, aged care organisations and peak organisations engaged in diversity-related representation, as well as others with an interest in diversity in the aged care sector.

This is the first opportunity to have your say.

The actions to be taken under the umbrella of the Framework will be relevant to Government, aged care providers, peak organisations, health professionals, consumers, their families and carers. The Framework is intended to assist providers, and enhance the sectors capacity, to better meet the diverse characteristics and life experiences of older people thereby ensuring inclusive aged care services.

Providing a response to the Framework is an opportunity to contribute to an area of aged care policy thinking.

The feedback from all stakeholders will be considered in developing the Framework. Consultation on a draft Framework will occur later in 2017.

If you have any difficulties completing the survey, please contact the Secretariat at:

[Diversity.sub-group@health.gov.au](mailto:Diversity.sub-group@health.gov.au) or call (02) 6289 5831.

## What is meant by diversity?

Recognising diversity involves a set of conscious practices that involve:

* understanding and appreciating interdependence of humanity, cultures, and the natural environment;
* practicing mutual respect for qualities and experiences that are different from our own;
* understanding that diversity includes not only ways of being but also ways of knowing;
* recognising that personal, cultural, and institutionalised discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others; and
* building alliances across differences so that we can work together to eradicate all forms of discrimination.[[2]](#footnote-2)

## Feedback from other diversity-related consultations will be considered

The Australian Government’s current National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Ageing and Aged Care Strategy (the LGBTI Strategy) and the National Ageing and Aged Care Strategy for People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Backgrounds (the CALD Strategy) have been the subject of separate consultations.

Feedback received from these reviews will inform both the development of the Framework and the specific CALD and LGBTI Action Plans.

## Structure of the Framework

While there are specific challenges, there are also many common challenges, for older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences who are seeking to access, or use, Australian Government funded aged care services.

The Framework will focus on older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences outlined below:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
* people from CALD backgrounds
* LGBTI peoples
* people who live in rural, remote or very remote areas
* people who are financially or socially disadvantaged
* veterans
* people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
* care‑leavers
* parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal
* people with a disability
* people with mental health problems and mental illness
* people living with cognitive impairment, including dementia.

| *Survey question:*   * Are there other diverse characteristics and life experiences that should be considered in the Framework? |
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## Action Plans

The Framework will address common barriers affecting access to aged care services to drive cultural and systemic improvements.

Under the Framework, three initial Action Plans will be developed:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities
* People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities
* Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) elders.

The Framework is envisaged to be a living document and Action Plans may be adjusted as the need arises over time. Additionally, new Action Plans may be created, for example, for people with a disability, people experiencing mental health problems/issues and people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

The Framework and Action Plans will include a governance structure that clearly identifies the role of government, providers, peak organisations, and consumers in realising the intent of the Framework and Action Plans. Details of the governance arrangements will be articulated in the next phase of consultation when further information regarding the mechanisms for monitoring progress against the Framework is better understood.

The Diversity Sub-Group will be consulting later in 2017 on the fully developed Framework and the drafting of the Action Plans, in the next round of consultations with a final consultation on the draft Action Plans occurring in early 2018.

## Consultation Phases

| **Phase** | **What will be Consulted on** |
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| Phase One (May-June 2017) | * Input into the development of the Diversity Framework |
| Phase Two (later in 2017) | * Comments on draft Diversity Framework * Comments on Framework and Action Plan governance * Input into first three action plans |
| Phase Three (early 2018) | * Comments on finalised action plans |



| *Survey questions:*   * Is this an effective structure for the Framework? * Is there anything missing? |
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## Measuring progress

As part of the further development of the Framework and Action Plans, consideration will be given to appropriate mechanisms for measuring and monitoring progress including opportunities to respond to the findings in a timely manner. Further details of these arrangements will be outlined in the next round of consultation.

| *Survey question:*   * What monitoring mechanisms would you like to see? |
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## Elements of the Framework

### **Vision**

Provision is made in the Framework for a vision statement seeking to capture the intent of the Framework. The vision should be articulated in a way that it is achievable.

A vision statement can be framed in relation to the following factors:

* **System approach:** The operation and responsiveness of the aged care system to people with diverse characteristics and life experiences – for example, the aged care system is accessible, equitable and inclusive for all older people.
* **Meeting individual needs:** Meeting the care needs of individuals with diverse needs and life experiences – for example, all parts of the aged care system are respectful and responsive to the diverse characteristics of older people.
* **Service delivery:** Aged care services are provided in a manner that respects consumer dignity, autonomy and choice; and the quality of care meets consumers, their families, carers and communities expectations and needs.
* **Equity:** Equity is about providing all older people with the means to access appropriate aged care services and supports to achieve outcomes comparable to all other older people.

**Draft vision statement**: All older people receive equitable access, treatment and outcomes and will experience a respectful and responsive aged care system that embraces their diverse characteristics and life experiences.

| *Survey questions:*   * What do you think of the proposed vision? * Is there anything missing? * What factors need to be considered in making clear the intent of the Framework? * Should specific, measurable goals be set out as part of the vision? * If so, what could these goals be? |
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## Imperatives

The imperatives are designed to drive change to make the aged care system more equitable, accessible and inclusive for older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences. They demonstrate a commitment to respecting and valuing diversity to support an aged care system where people of all identities and experiences are understood, appreciated and fully included in all aspects of aged care and where equitable treatment and outcomes are evident. The imperatives will facilitate better access to the aged care system and will lead to better outcomes by meeting the needs of older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences.

Some of the imperatives that could be included in the Framework are:

* **Empowerment**: older people from diverse backgrounds, their families and carers are respected and supported by the sector and have the information, knowledge and confidence to maximise their use of the aged care system.
* **Equity of access:** older people have equitable access to services from providers that are effective and appropriate to their needs and takes account of individual circumstances.
* **Inclusion:** the needs of older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences, their families and carers are included in the development, implementation and evaluation of aged care policies and programs on an ongoing basis by providers and the Government.
* **Quality:** providers offer care and support services that are appropriate to the needs of older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences, their families and carers and are assessed accordingly.
* **Capacity building:** All older people and their communities have the capacity to articulate their ageing and aged care needs; be involved in the development of services and the workforce to meet their needs; and allow them to embrace their diverse characteristics and life experiences.
* **Responsive and accountable:** providers offer aged care services that meet needs and expectations of older people with accountable and transparent reporting and activities.

| *Survey questions:*   * Are the suggested imperatives the right ones? * What other imperatives could be considered? * Do the imperatives cover all issues for Government? * Do the imperatives cover all issues for aged care service providers? * Do the imperatives cover all issues for individuals with diverse characteristics and life experiences? * Do the imperatives cover all issues for carers? |
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## Priorities

The priorities will be outcome focused and address the issues of older people from all diverse groups. They willguide providers and peak organisations on how they can be incorporated in their policies and procedures to improve quality care and support that is appropriate to their needs.

Following are priorities that could be considered in the development of the Framework:

* **Making informed choices:** Older people are given information in a way that enables them to be well informed about aged care and healthy ageing to enact their informed choice and control over the care they require.
* **Adopting systemic approaches to planning and implementation:** To capture, monitor, analyse and evaluate data about the characteristics and life experiences of older people to inform a systemic approach to planning and implementation.
* **Ensuring quality care and support:** All older people receive quality aged care services and supports that meet their diverse needs, particularly where there are thin markets.
* **Supporting a proactive and flexible system:** A proactive and flexible aged care system that will respond to the needs of existing and emerging diverse groups, including the aged care workforce.
* **Respectful and inclusive services:** Providers demonstrate respect for and are inclusive of all older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences, their families and their carers.
* **Addressing population specific needs:** The identified key issues for specific older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences are effectively addressed.

| *Survey questions:*   * What other priorities can be included to address issues faced by all older people irrespective of their diverse characteristics and life experiences? * Are there any gaps? * Are these the right priorities? * Do these priorities cover the needs of Government? * Do these priorities cover all issues for the aged care service providers? * Do these priorities cover all issues for individuals with diverse characteristics and life experiences? * Do these priorities cover all issues for carers? |
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## Action Plans

The Action Plans will be developed once the imperatives and priorities of the Framework are tested with the sector. The sector will be consulted on the Action Plans in the second and third tranche of consultation. Feedback from the sector on the Framework will inform the Action Plans. Minster Wyatt has announced that the three Action Plans will be developed by May 2018 commencing with:

* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities
* CALD Communities
* LGBTI elders

| *Survey question:*   * Are there any additional comments or feedback you would like to provide, or any other issues that are not captured in this paper? |
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1. National Aged Care Alliance (2017) Ensuring equity of access and outcomes in the future aged care system [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Patrick and Kumar (2012), Managing Workplace Diversity: Issues and Challenges, *SAGE – Open Journal*, April-June, pp. 1-15 cited at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244012444615> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)