

14 February 2024

Janet Anderson PSM, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner
The Department of Health and Aged Care
E: AgedCareLegislativeReform@health.gov.au

Re: Consultation on the new Aged Care Act

Dear Ms Anderson,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Federal new Aged Care Act being implemented in July 2024.

Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA) is the peak professional association for exercise and sports science professionals in Australia, representing more than 11,000 members comprising of university qualified Accredited Exercise Physiologists (AEPs), Accredited Sports Scientists (AES), Accredited High-Performance Managers and Accredited Exercise Scientists.

Exercise physiology is a crucial component of the allied health workforce, and it plays a significant role in improving the health and wellbeing of older Australians, focusing on the prevention and management of chronic diseases, injuries, and falls prevention using exercise and lifestyle interventions.

Exercise physiology and exercise science are imperative in aged care, particularly in preventative care and reablement support. Prioritising wellness and reablement will help reduce the burden of disability and chronic conditions on health and aged care services. With cost-effective, evidence-based supports, AEPs and AESs are well positioned to support this approach.

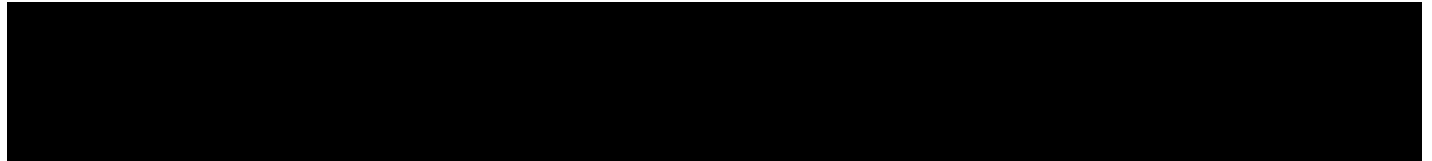
ESSA would like to extend our support of the Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) submission with an emphasis on the following points:

- The Royal Commission concluded that allied health should be regarded as a fundamental element of the aged care system, and therefore recommended that aged care provided to people at home and in residential facilities include a level of allied health care appropriate to each person's needs.
- Allied health is currently significantly underprovided and underfunded, particularly in residential aged care. Since AHPA's submission in September 2023, average allied health minutes in residential aged care have decreased further, to 4.26 minutes.^[1]
- Inadequate funding of allied health services has flow-on effects to the allied health aged care workforce, including deterioration in the quality of care available to residents.
- Allied health assistants ('AHAs') are sometimes being used to carry out essential allied health tasks, which can expose residents to unacceptable risks.

ESSA looks forward to seeing appropriate recognition of allied health professionals working in Aged Care reflected in the new Aged Care Act, with additional funding to effectively support older Australian's equitable access to fundamental health and wellness outcomes.

ESSA is available to discuss the new Aged Care Act with you and can be reached at [REDACTED] or 07 3171 3335.

Yours sincerely,



Judy Powell
Policy & Advocacy Manager
Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA)

Elyse Hocking
Policy and Advocacy Advisor
Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA)

Reference:

[\[1\]](#) Department of Health and Aged Care, Quarterly Financial Snapshot of the Aged Care Sector Quarter 4 2022-23, April to June 2023, 16.

