



## **Submission**

2025 Aged Care Rules ( Stage 4b  
release – Remaining rules)

May 2025

**Our purpose**

To enable the pursuit of a good life for everyone

## Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the *2025 Aged Care Rules (Stage 4b) consultation*. Our feedback on the remaining rules is particularly focused on provider registration requirements and the obligations of digital platform providers.

Hireup is an organisation deeply committed to safe, high-quality disability and aged care services, and our perspective outlined in this submission is grounded in our values, and builds on our September 2024 submission on the *Aged Care Bill 2024*. We are encouraged to see that the draft rules address some of the issues previously raised. While we support the new measures aimed at increasing transparency, we also believe that stronger accountability is necessary. Specifically, we maintain that comprehensive provider registration for all service providers – including digital platforms and subcontractors – is essential to protect older Australians and prevent past regulatory failures.

## Transparency of Provider Relationships and Interests

We commend the recent improvements in the draft Stage 4b Rules that enhance transparency of business interests and arrangements between providers. In particular, requiring operators of aged care digital platforms to formally disclose any professional or corporate relationships with registered providers is a valuable step forward. Such requirements will shine a much needed light on the ownership structures, referral partnerships, and potential conflicts of interest that could otherwise remain hidden.

Transparency is crucial for meaningful accountability, as it allows regulators and the public to understand where providers' interests lie.

However, we recommend that these transparency measures be made more prominent and accessible. It is not enough for a platform to quietly notify the regulator of its business arrangements – this kind of information should be readily available to care recipients and their families. For example, digital platform providers should prominently display their registration status and affiliations on their websites or platform homepages, and proactively inform clients of any relevant business interests or financial arrangements – especially in the event of a referral.

By making such information highly visible, older Australians and their families can make informed choices and have confidence that platform providers are operating above board, and that their interests are always at the centre of their support. Enhanced transparency, presented in an accessible and user-friendly manner, will ensure the new disclosure rules lead to meaningful accountability to the community, rather than just the regulator (though we do acknowledge the importance of this, too).

## **We do not believe the rules go far enough.**

While the introduction of specific obligations for digital platform operators is a step forward, we remain concerned that the proposed rules still fall short of ensuring high quality and appropriate accountability for services delivered via these platforms.

We acknowledge that registered providers are technically accountable for the service quality delivered through platforms, however we remain concerned about the lack of transparency in the interplay between platforms themselves, and the providers who use them, for the reasons detailed below:

- It is still unclear how platforms will ensure that sole traders using their services comply with the obligations required by the registered providers. In these models, the contract is typically between the client and the sole trader (with the worker subject to the platform T&Cs), with no formal agreement between the sole trader and the platform's associated registered provider.
- This presents a gap in compliance mechanisms, particularly around the screening requirements, worker qualifications, and adherence to care standards.
- While the platform may be required to uphold their obligations at a business level, enforcement over individual workers is still not adequately addressed under the current framework. Without mechanisms to ensure workers comply with the same rigorous standards, the quality of care delivered remains vulnerable to inconsistent application across the platform.
- This regulatory gap risks undermining the integrity of the system, leaving care recipients exposed to poor-quality services that are not being directly monitored.

Hireup's position has consistently been that comprehensive, universal registration of all care providers is essential for a safe and effective system. We reiterate that stance here. Every provider of aged care services – whether a large residential operator, a subcontracted home care agency, or a digital platform – should be subject to the same baseline regulatory scrutiny and accountability. We are seeing this change occur within the NDIS, where mandatory registration for all providers has been announced, with platform providers being expedited, due to the unique risks they pose to NDIS participants. Given the continuing regulatory alignment in the care sectors, failure in the aged care sector to align with the NDIS on this issue would be a significant lost opportunity.

Relying solely on registered providers to oversee and take responsibility for the compliance of third-party platforms or subcontractors is an inherently risky approach. In its current form, the scheme places the full weight of compliance on registered providers for services that may be delivered by completely separate entities, which is

beyond the reasonable control of those providers in many cases. As has been raised previously, shifting all compliance responsibility onto registered providers creates significant risks. It can lead to confusion about who is accountable for quality on the ground and may allow problems to go unaddressed if the unregistered party fails to meet standards. In addition, to some extent, the real-world outcome is that older Australians will end up being the regulators of their own care, which is surely not the intention of the proposal.

As we noted in our 2024 submission, overburdening registered providers with policing third parties is likely to result in oversight “falling by the wayside,” particularly as they work to adapt to the stream of new obligations contained within the new *Aged Care Act*. Such outcomes are unacceptable. We urge the Department to very closely monitor these issues over the coming months, and act swiftly if any evidence of subpar quality from platform providers, reporting gaps or other poor performance indicators emerge.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Hireup supports the positive steps outlined in the Stage 4b draft Rules to bring greater transparency and oversight to digital platform providers in aged care.

We greatly appreciate the constructive approach taken by the Department throughout this consultation process. However, to truly safeguard older Australians and ensure high-quality care, Hireup maintains that these measures must be complemented by stronger, universal regulation of all care providers. Such reforms are vital to avoid the mistakes seen in other sectors and to uphold public trust in the aged care system.

While we stand by our position, we respect the Department’s decision on this matter and urge that the robustness of the regulatory system be subject to ongoing scrutiny as the new framework is implemented after July 1. We request that any system gaps or shortcomings that may emerge are dealt with quickly.

Thank you for considering our submission. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss the matters raised further, we would welcome the opportunity to engage as the rules are finalised. Beyond this consultation, we remain committed to working collaboratively with the Government to achieve a safer, more accountable aged care sector for all Australians.