

THE Advocate

PROVIDING A VOICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE • QACAG Inc Newsletter Ed6(1) • Autumn 2024

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Members

I hope that you are all well and looking forward to cooler weather in the Autumn.

There is still much activity on the aged care front and we have been busily engaged since the draft new Aged Care Act was published on 14 December 2023. QACAG held a caucus regarding the response that we wished to make. The resulting submission is now available on our website and on your behalf, I would like to convey our thanks to Helen Macukewicz for the great work that she has done in co-ordinating and producing this document.

As a result of the publication of the draft Act QACAG has also been in consultation with our fellow advocacy groups, mainly through CARA (Community of Aged Rights Advocates) formed after a meeting last year of grass roots advocacy groups with Senator Janet Rice. We have worked on a submission with this group, and it will be published shortly.

On 20 February 2024 a small group of QACAG members met with Commissioner Janet Anderson at her request. The meeting resulted from our expressed concerns about the limited reach and opportunities

for communication in ACQSC publications and events and we are very grateful to the Commissioner for the time that she gave to us. We discussed the need for a sense of audience in all Commission communication which would make provision for varying levels of skills in technology, literacy and cognition and recognise the needs of people from CALD backgrounds.

Following on from the meeting we have been contacted by Tara Pamula of ACQSC who was also online during our session with the Commissioner, and we have been requested to work alongside the Commission on the development of the strengthened Quality Standards. We are extremely pleased with this opportunity.

As stated earlier, there is still much work to be done and we can feel proud of our achievements. I would like to request that you help us to increase the membership of QACAG in any way that you can. This may involve giving out membership leaflets, speaking about us at your own activity or social groups or persuading friends or family members to join us.

My very best wishes

Margaret Zangh

President QACAG Inc



QACAG IS RECRUITING

Do you know anyone who is as passionate about aged care as you?

Simply forward their details, or ask them to contact us on QACAG@nswnma.asn.au



QACAG

ANNUAL FEES

Fees are best paid by bank transfer, although we do still accept cheques by post.

National Australia Bank.
QACAG Inc.

BSB: 082-356

Account Number: 32-838-3965

AGED CARE ADVOCACY



Janet Anderson, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner

Rather than spending a quiet summer contemplating our next moves, and enjoying a welcome reprieve from aged care reforms, QACAG representatives have been busier than ever, with opportunities to engage in various consultations around the draft *Aged Care Act*. We are stronger for having such well-recognised allies and experts in their field. Our voices are much

more powerful when we work collaboratively.

In addition, QACAG representatives met with Commissioner Janet Anderson and her colleagues to raise our concerns around the lack of engagement opportunities the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission have afforded its families and consumer's panel.

We wish to thank our QACAG organisational members, Carers Circle, Aged Care Reform and Multicultural Communities Council of the Illawarra for their assistance in representing us at engagement opportunities, their individual and collective expertise adds an extra dimension to our advocacy work.

CONSULTATIONS AND INQUIRIES

Draft New Aged Care Act

Following extensive consultation with our members, both organisational and individual, we provided a submission to this landmark piece of legislation for aged care. QACAG members also attended KPMG consultations which were held around Australia during February. We hope to see further consultation and will be keeping members informed of its progress through parliament.

Strengthened Aged Care Standards

As always, there are plenty of consultations to keep us busy, as policy reform keeps pace with legislative changes and the aged care reforms promised post Royal Commission. We have long-held concerns about the weakening of aged care regulation, including the implementation of poorly articulated benchmarks to measure compliance. We will be providing a response to this consultation which closes on 30 April 2024. We encourage our members to get involved.

www.agedcarequality.gov.au/get-involved/consultation-and-engagement-hub/standards-guidance-consultation

NEW AGED CARE ACT



The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety found that the *Aged Care Act* and its related legislation is no longer fit for purpose. This is because it is structured around providers and how to fund them, rather than around the people accessing services and what they need.

The new rights-based Act aims to put older people who need aged care at the centre of the system.

The new Act will provide the framework for fundamental change within the aged care sector, and aims to deliver:

- responses to 33 Royal Commission recommendations that rely on legislation
- new protections for whistleblowers
- increased penalties for providing poor quality care
- enhanced regulatory powers for the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and Department of Health and Aged Care.

The new Act also builds on aged care reforms that have already been delivered.

Despite its promises the draft Act still has significant gaps which if left unchecked, will hinder the ultimate aim of better standards of care for older people.

We encourage all QACAG members to get involved as the Act progresses.

You can check out more information and find out how you can get involved in the consultation process here: www.health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-act

Read QACAG submission here: www.qacag.org.au/submission.html



We wish to thank our Vice President Debbie Lang who produced a QACAG tablecloth for trade displays, demonstrating her wonderful craft skills.

We encourage our members to have a think about events coming up where QACAG could potentially hold a small stall to promote ourselves.



MEMBERS IN FOCUS

Annette Peters

I am a retired registered nurse of 50 years.

I worked in acute care, mental health, and latterly, aged care. I completed post graduate studies in Geriatric Nursing and Dementia.

It was in aged care I found the area that I wanted to work. However, it became very evident there were many problems in aged care.

Following the 1997 *Aged Care Act*, I and others have been working to see changes which has spanned over 25 years. We discovered QACAG, joined the group, and made it possible to lobby and work with support of the group, sharing concerns and solutions.

I would encourage anyone who works in aged care including community care, has family experience and cares about best practice and positive outcomes in aged care, to join QACAG. The Royal Commission was so important, but there is still so much more to do.



VALE

Shirley Ross-Shuley

We were saddened to hear of the early, and unexpected death of Shirley Ross-Shuley.

Shirley had been a QACAG member for many years and was active in the Blue Mountains with Trish Doyle, MP. Also, as an active member of the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association. RN 24/7 was a particular issue close to her heart. Annette Peters attended a memorial service for Shirley in the Blue Mountains and gave her children condolences on behalf of QACAG.

10 Questions Leaflet

10 Questions is a series of leaflets written by nurses, doctors and experts with experience in aged care.

The best way to find a residential aged care facility that suits you is to visit a few. To find your local ones, or for more information about aged care services contact:

My Aged Care

PHONE 1800 200 422 • EMAIL myagedcare.gov.au

10 Questions

EMAIL tenquestions@nswnma.asn.au

WEB www.10questions.org.au

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SELECT YOUR LANGUAGE

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