



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care

Ref No: MC24-006576

Ms Margaret Zanghi
President
QACAG Inc
QACAG@nswma.asn.au

Dear Ms Zanghi

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 April 2024 to the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP regarding the Single Assessment System for Aged Care. The Minister has asked me to reply.

From late 2024, Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs), Regional Assessment Services (RAS) and Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) assessment services will transition into the Single Assessment System. The goal of the Single Assessment System is to provide a better experience for older people as they enter or progress within the aged care system, as each organisation will be empowered and trained to do all the assessments that they need across both home care and residential care.

I note your concerns around privatisation of aged care assessment services, in particular your concern that entry of new private providers may impact on connections between the health and aged care systems. The Australian Government has always commissioned a range of providers to deliver aged care assessment services including state and territory governments, for-profit and not-for-profit non-government organisations. As current contracts have been in place for several years and already been extended on a number of occasions, it is appropriate and necessary under the Commonwealth Procurement Rules to retender the service through an open approach to market producing stability with the implementation of long-term contracts.

Noting the importance of the role of state and territory governments in the aged care assessment system, I want to reassure you that states and territories will continue to have a role in delivering aged care assessments as part of the Single Assessment Workforce, including undertaking all assessments in a hospital setting and a proportion of assessments in community settings. Arrangements for state and territory participation in the system are being negotiated directly with jurisdictions, rather than through participation in the open tender process for the remainder of providers.

Arrangements under the Single Assessment System will also improve assurance and accountability which will simplify and improve access to in-home and residential aged care services for clients, while ensuring aged care assessments are rigorous, accurate and consistent so that the community can be confident Government funding for aged care is targeted to a client's care needs.

The Single Assessment Workforce will continue to be comprised of a mixture of clinically and non-clinically qualified staff to conduct assessments proportionate to the needs of older Australians. Future aged care assessment arrangements will ensure that older Australians with more complex needs are assessed by appropriately skilled staff. This is in line with Recommendation 28 from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's final report that stated multidisciplinary teams should be used to assess older Australians with more complex needs. Assessment organisations will consider factors such as the assessors' skills, competencies, qualifications, availability, proximity to the person and current workload when deciding to whom an assessment should be assigned.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JA', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Julia Atkinson
Aged Care Assessments Branch
Department of Health and Aged Care
14 June 2024