

NCSS AND AGED CARE QUALITY STANDARDS SUMMARY

The National Catholic Safeguarding Standards Edition 2 (NCSS) has been broadened to incorporate safeguarding measures for adults, with a focus on adults at risk. This will support a wider range of Catholic ministries and services to prioritise safeguarding. This means that Catholic entities that provide ministries and/or services to children and also health and aged care, disability and any other ministry and/or service engaging to vulnerable people are now covered by the NCSS. Ultimately this will improve the safety, health and wellbeing of service users, families, carers and the community as a whole. Such a response by the Catholic Church in Australia directly links to the safeguarding commitment that the Catholic church has made to the Australian community and to emphasises the purpose of the NCSS. It recognises that the NCSS are a means to support ministries to operate in ways that outwork the Gospel to provide ministries and/or services to people that follows the example of Jesus (especially to those who are at risk).

On 1 July 2019, the eight Aged Care Quality Standards became effective to increase accountability for aged care providers to ensure service delivery is of high quality. There is significant alignment between the NCSS Ed. 2 and the aged care Quality Standards, so currently Catholic entities providing aged care are in a strong position to meet both sets of Standards.

Key Changes

In the final report, the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety released 148 recommendations targeting the Commonwealth Government to drive significant improvement in the overall Aged Care system in Australia. A number of the recommendations are set to be implemented over the next two year period.

- **By 1 July 2023 the Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth) will be replaced by a new Aged Care Act.**
- **The establishment of an independent Aged Care Quality and Safety Authority with overall responsibility for safeguarding the quality and safety of aged care through enforcing compliance with new Act.**
- **By December 2022 a full review and amendment (where required) of the Aged Care Quality Standards.**
- **A new Governance Standard.**
- **The development and implementation of aged care quality indicators.**
- **Improvements in complaints management and serious incident reporting.**
- **Improvements in education, qualifications and training.**
- **Improvements in community awareness and cultural safety in aged care services.**

NCSS Responding to Changes

As key changes are implemented, these will be reviewed considering the NCSS to ensure alignment is maintained to federal aged care legislation and regulatory standards.

To further assist Catholic entities in responding to these upcoming changes, the NCSS Ed. 2 has already incorporated a number of key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. These include:

- **A greater focus on education and training of staff and volunteers in high quality service provision including recognising and appropriately responding to adult abuse.**
- **A greater focus on cultural safety and the cultural support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in service delivery.**
- **A greater focus on safety and the cultural support of those from diverse backgrounds in service delivery.**
- **A greater focus on consumer consultation and participation and the importance of social connections for adults at risk.**

Outcome

The Aged Care Quality Standards combined with the NCSS serve to greatly assist Catholic entities operating in the health and aged care sectors to meet their safeguarding requirements and provide ministries that are safe and operate in ways that outwork the Gospel.