



The Hon Anika Wells MP
Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Sport
Member for Lilley

Ref No: MC23-013515

Senator Janet Rice
Senator for Victoria
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
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Dear Senator,

Thank you for your correspondence of 11 April 2023 regarding your meeting with aged care advocacy organisations and individual advocates. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I appreciate your ongoing interest in the Australian Government's aged care reforms and your advocacy on behalf of older people and advocates to ensure their interests are considered as the Government continues to develop the new Aged Care Act (Act) and its underpinning policies.

My office is working with the Department of Health and Aged Care to arrange discussions with select aged care advocacy organisations and individual advocates to discuss aspects of the new Act, including many of those that I believe you met with earlier this year. The discussions will test foundational elements of the new Act, including the rights basis of the new Act, the proposed statement of rights and enforcement pathways, a definition of high-quality care, eligibility requirements, embedding supported decision making and whistle-blower protections.

On these and other topics, the department has been working closely with the National Aged Care Advisory Council and the Council of Elders on proposed policy arrangements for the new Act. Feedback is also being sought on specific policy reforms as the new Act is developed, such as the new model for regulating aged care (new model).

A consultation paper with details of the proposed new model was released on 26 April 2023, and public consultation closed on 23 June 2023. The department also held public webinars on 9 May 2023 to discuss the new model, and on 18 May 2023 to discuss the new home care program. Both webinars included a discussion of the proposed definition of high-quality care and of whistle-blower protections under the new Act. These and other such consultation activities are providing the public with an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about legislative and broader aged care reforms.

An exposure draft of the Bill for the new Act is planned to be released for public consultation later in 2023, with opportunities for interested organisations and individuals to have their say about the draft Bill. I understand the legislation is complex, and a range of accessible information will be provided during the consultations to explain the various aspects of the new legislation and what it means in practice for older people, their families and carers, and providers.

With the new Act placing the rights and needs of older people at its centre, I am committed to ensuring its development is genuinely informed by their feedback to ensure we build an equitable, high-quality and sustainable aged care system.

Thank you for writing on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anika Wells', with a stylized, cursive script.

Anika Wells

14 August 2023