

Meeting the expectations of Australia's ageing population

As our ageing population continues to increase, its growing needs and expectations for quality aged care services will have far-reaching impacts on the healthcare system and particularly service providers.

Life expectancy in Australia is about 82.5 years on average, while the percentage of people aged 65 years and over is [projected to increase](#) from 15% (2017) to 22% (2057) and 25% by 2097.

On the positive side, many older people are in good health and continue to do paid and volunteer work well beyond retirement age, live independently and [contribute socially and economically](#) to our community.

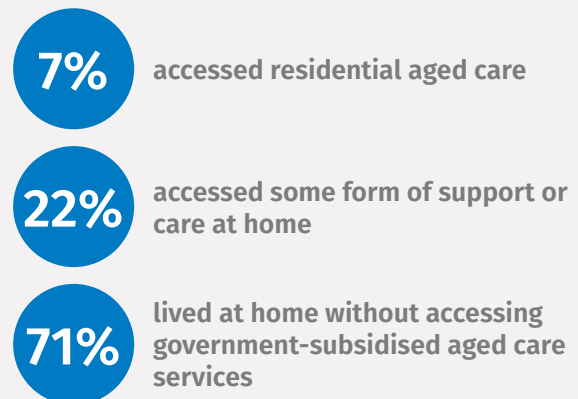
However, there's no doubt our ageing population has numerous challenges, including:

- **Financial** – increased costs of healthcare and government pensions.
- **Social** – eg social isolation where people move away after retirement, and increased pressure on younger family members.
- **Pressure on carers** – according to Carers Australia, the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index shows carers have the lowest wellbeing of any of the groups measured.
- **Labour market pressures and the economy** – a higher aged population can mean a shrinking labour pool and fewer people paying taxes. According to the Productivity Commission, this reduces productivity and economic growth.

IMPACTS ON THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Advancing age can increase the risk of disability and many health conditions, such as arthritis, cancer and dementia. This can put pressure on healthcare services and create hospital challenges, while more people are also likely to need home care or residential aged care services.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), more than 1.2 million Australians received [aged care services](#) in 2017-2018. Of those aged 65 and over:



The number of Australians expected to use aged care services is estimated to almost triple to [3.5 million](#) by 2050.

Many providers are also saying funding for aged care (around [\\$20 billion in 2018-2019](#)) is too low and needs to be increased.

A greater demand for health and aged care services also creates challenges for care and nursing staff. For example, the demand for workers could exceed supply before long, putting pressure on existing staff workloads. Attracting new employees to the sector can also be a challenge, especially with the work often being poorly paid.

More training and better remuneration for aged care workers were among the [recommendations](#) made to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, "aimed at improving their working lives so that our elderly citizens can receive safe care of the quality that they should receive in a country as rich as ours".

GOVERNMENT POLICIES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

The Australian Government has recognised the need to meet community expectations around quality of care and address the economic impacts of our ageing population, and has:

- Lifted the pension age from 65 to 67. The pension age will increase incrementally until 2023. The measure was introduced “to meet the challenges of an ageing population and the economic impact it will have for all Australians”.
- Increased the rate for compulsory superannuation to 12% by 2025 to help people better fund their later years and reduce strain on the pension system.
- Introduced [My Aged Care](#), an online entry point to find and access government-funded services, including information about what services are available to help people stay in their own home, or what to expect in an aged care home.

- Introduced [Home Care Packages](#) allowing people greater choice to direct their own care, choosing what services and how they are delivered.

The government is also working towards more stable funding arrangements for residential aged care services and [other reforms](#).

SERVICE PROVIDER COMPLIANCE

Aged care providers must comply with the Quality and Safety Commission Quality Standards which focus on outcomes for consumers and reflect the [level of care and services](#) the community now expects.

Having the right tools, together with a [system for continuous improvement](#), ensures you can take innovative approaches to deliver quality services to consumers and meet accreditation requirements, resulting in better pricing for services and attracting higher-paid qualified staff.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES ALIGNED WITH QUALITY STANDARDS

Wolters Kluwer Health and Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) have developed the following tools and resources to support aged care services to address Quality Standards requirements:



[JBI's evidence-based Carers Manual](#) focuses on best practice activities to meet residents' daily living needs, as well as Quality Standards 1 and 3. This manual is designed to meet carer workforce training and knowledge needs that reflect consumer expectations for culturally appropriate, safe quality care and services.



The [JBI Practice Manual](#) helps you deliver safe and effective personal and clinical care aligned with Quality Standards 1, 2, and 3. This comprehensive resource, which complements and extends from the JBI Carers Manual, was developed with industry leaders including Nursing Directors, public and private sector experts and safety and quality representatives.

JBI is one of the world's leading evidence-based practice organisations which has been [developing and updating resources for the Australian aged care sector](#) since the early 200s. Its evidence-based practice model is considered a benchmark in the global healthcare industry.

The impact of Australia's ageing population and its growing expectations for quality aged care services will have far-reaching impacts on service providers. Find out what resources are available for aged care workers.

Additional sources:

[Life expectancy in Australia](#)

[Aged care system in Australia](#)

[Ageing and the health system: challenges, opportunities and adaptations](#)

[The gateway to the aged care system](#)

[Government spending on aged care](#)

[Impact of caring](#)

[Extra funding for aged care in the budget, but not enough to meet demand](#)

[Economic implications of an ageing Australia](#)

[Home Care Packages program reforms](#)

[Residential aged care funding reform](#)