



Australian Government

Department of Health and Aged Care

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

# National Aged Care Data Strategy

*June 2023 Draft*



**AIHW**

# Acknowledgement of Country

We, the Department of Health and Aged Care and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and acknowledge and respect their continuing connections and relationships to country, rivers, land and sea.

We acknowledge the ongoing contribution Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make across the health and aged care systems and wider community. We also pay our respects to Elders past, present and future and extend that respect to all Traditional Custodians of this land.

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians on whose ancestral lands offices are located.

# Overview

This draft National Aged Care Data Strategy (the data strategy) builds on what the Department of Health and Aged Care (the Department) and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) have heard through broad consultation with stakeholders over the last 18 months.

The data strategy will be endorsed by the Minister for Aged Care and authored by the Department. The intended audience are users of the aged care data system – including older Australians, aged care workers and service providers, governments and researchers – and those supporting the system such as technology providers. The Department is accountable for tracking progress and implementing the actions under each strategic priority of the data strategy. Collectively these stakeholder groups all have a role in delivering against, and/or benefiting from, the data strategy.

## Context for the data strategy

**The data strategy landscape** Describes the scope of the aged care data system, the drivers for change, the enablers that will support the strategy and our partners in delivering on the strategy.

## Core elements of the data strategy

<b>Vision</b>	Sets out the aspirational goals of the data strategy.
<b>Purpose and intended benefits</b>	Outlines what we want to achieve with the data strategy and communicates the benefits for our partners.
<b>Strategic priorities</b>	Identifies 8 key areas where action is needed.
<b>Implementation plan</b>	Provides a time-based view of the concrete actions that will be carried out for each strategic priority.

# The data strategy landscape

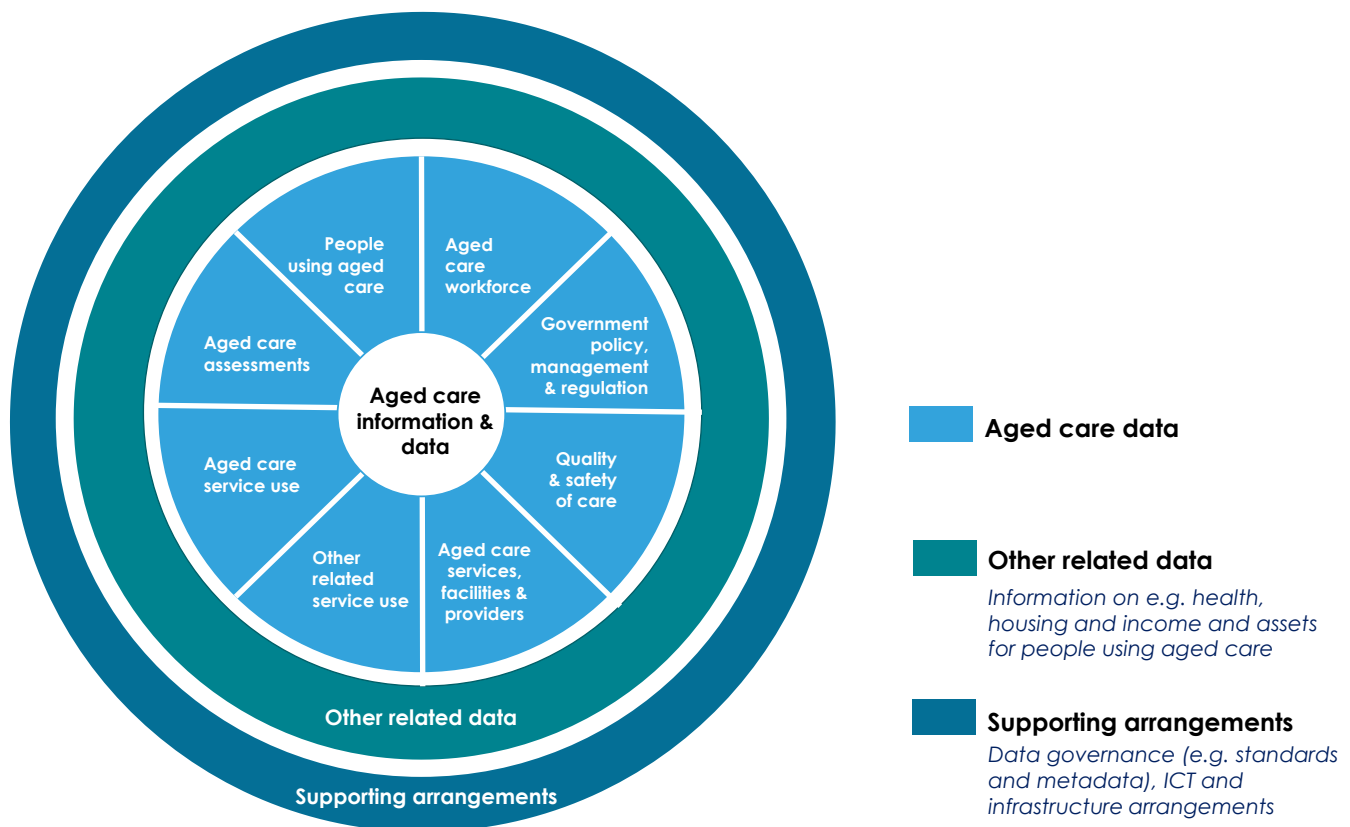
This section briefly outlines the scope, drivers for change, the policy context and how the data strategy will align with, and leverage, intersecting work across the Australian Government.

## What does the data strategy apply to?

The data strategy applies to all aspects of the aged care data system: including the range of data related to aged care in Australia, and the data governance, information standards and infrastructure arrangements associated with collecting, sharing and using these data. It encompasses data about:

- ❖ older Australians seeking and using aged care, and their carers
- ❖ activity within the aged care system
- ❖ services and providers operating within the system
- ❖ the aged care workforce
- ❖ the interface between the aged care system and other health- and welfare-related systems
- ❖ quantifiable characteristics about the system itself, and
- ❖ perceptions, performance and outcomes of the aged care system.

Figure 1: The aged care data system



## Drivers for change

The aged care data strategy interacts with and complements strategies and initiatives aiming to improve digital and workforce capability in aged care. This includes recognising the pivotal role of the aged care workforce and digital and information and communication technologies in achieving the goals of the aged care data strategy. It provides clear links between the respective strategies and implementation plans to put these goals into practice.

Key drivers for aged care data improvement include:

- ❖ The final recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the Royal Commission), which sought improvements to address:
  - ❖ fragmented and incomplete data, with notable data gaps in areas such as workforce, finance, regular assessment of care needs, quality of life, quality and safety of care
  - ❖ lack of agreed common data definitions across the aged care sector
  - ❖ limited interoperability between systems and entities
  - ❖ limited integration and analysis of data to inform a person-centred view of pathways and outcomes across aged care, health and other support systems – and thereby improvements to aged care
  - ❖ limited transparency and access to the right data when needed.
- ❖ Recognition that the whole Australian economy is facing digital and data transformation challenges.
- ❖ Significant pressure on the aged care sector, including workforce shortages and conditions, COVID-19, natural disasters, and relatively low or varied data and digital capability.
- ❖ The widely recognised need for a systematic approach for developing and improving a comprehensive national aged care system.

## Change enablers

The data strategy will closely align with other health and aged care strategies, plans and reform activities, such as:

- ❖ the Department's data strategy 2022-25 *Harnessing the power of data for better health, aged care and wellbeing*. This is the overarching strategy, under which our aged care data strategy sits.
- ❖ Aged care digital strategy (draft).
- ❖ ICT strategy 2022-25, which provides direction for how technology will support and shape changes, under which the aged care digital strategy sits.
- ❖ Aged care workforce strategy and aged care workforce action plan
- ❖ Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Digital Strategy
- ❖ Revised Aged Care Quality Standards (draft)
- ❖ the new Aged Care Act and Regulatory Model.

The actions committed to under these related strategies will be expected to deliver some of the aged care data system improvements. Key aspects that will be leveraged are outlined on the next page.

## Department's Data Strategy

The commitment to improve:

- data governance at the Department level
- alignment and coordination of data and digital efforts across the Health portfolio (plus supporting governance).

## Department's ICT Strategy

The commitment to provide:

- readily available information to those that are entitled to receive it
- real-time data exchange between government agencies (Government to Government - G2G), accessing data at its source of truth across a distributed data ecosystem
- data that is more discoverable, accessible, useable and interoperable.

## Aged Care Digital Strategy

The commitment to:

- provide the aged care sector with a clear vision of how digital will shape the aged care system, including business to government B2G initiatives
- ensure that older people are well-supported and provided with consistent and equitable access to information and services.

## Aged Care Workforce Action Plan

Initiatives to support:

- aged care providers to develop sustainable and coordinated approaches for growing a skilled workforce
- a continuous learning environment.

Commitment, cooperation and collaboration across all governments, and particularly the health and aged care portfolio, will be important to look for ways to leverage opportunities, both at the strategic and implementation levels, for aged care data improvements. Current opportunities include:

- ❖ Australia's National Digital Health Strategy 2022-2027
- ❖ National Healthcare Interoperability Plan (draft)
- ❖ National Health Reform Agreement (in particular, the commitment to monitor the impact of interfaces between the health, disability and aged care systems on outcomes for older Australians)
- ❖ National Dementia Action Plan (draft)
- ❖ Continued effort to enhance data literacy and capabilities in the Australian Public Service (APS) based on the APS Data Capability Framework.

It will be important to make best use of opportunities to improve safe and secure data sharing between governments, such as those afforded by the Commonwealth Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022 and related legislation at the state/territory level.

## Partners in delivering the data strategy

Cooperation across the aged care data system will be needed to deliver on the data strategy. Key stakeholders and partners include:

<b>People</b> <i>using aged care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older Australians, their families, carers and support networks</li> </ul>
<b>Workers</b> <i>providing care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The workforce providing aged care to older Australians</li> </ul>
<b>Service providers</b> <i>delivering care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service providers delivering aged care to older Australians</li> </ul>
<b>Technology vendors</b> <i>supporting care</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology vendors supporting the delivery of aged care</li> </ul>
<b>Governments</b> <i>managing the system</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governments designing, funding, managing and regulating the aged care system</li> </ul>
<b>Researchers</b> <i>generating insights</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People who use and analyse aged care data to inform improvements to the aged care system</li> </ul>

The following agencies across the health and aged care portfolio have critical roles and responsibilities that will support the data strategy and be reflected in the associated actions in the Implementation plan. These will be articulated in the final data strategy for:

- ❖ Department of Health and Aged Care
- ❖ Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- ❖ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- ❖ Australian Digital Health Agency
- ❖ Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority
- ❖ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care.

Key support agencies beyond this portfolio are the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Services Australia, the National Disability Insurance Agency and the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

## Identifying what matters

This section briefly outlines our key learnings from the first round of consultation, hearing from government and non-government stakeholders on the things that matter to them.

### A successful data strategy

Consultation identified a range of success factors. The data strategy must:

- ❖ Be future-oriented and show what it contributes to desirable system outcomes.
- ❖ Consider the language carefully (keeping it simple and meaningful).
- ❖ Ensure internal consistency and alignment between related strategies and reform activities.
- ❖ Be user-centred (demonstrating key impacts and benefits).
- ❖ Build in accountability with outcomes that are actionable, measurable and can be evaluated.
- ❖ Recognise that aged care does not happen in a vacuum – people interact with aged care, health and other systems simultaneously, and their family, friends and carers play a significant role.

## Challenges to overcome

The consultation process also provided insights into stakeholder views on the issues, barriers and priorities for the data strategy, including the need to:

- ❖ Enhance data and information in commonly agreed priority areas, including better data about service users' demographic profile, clinical and functioning needs, experience and quality of life together with information about workforce and service quality and safety.
- ❖ Implement consistent data standards and associated governance across the aged care system to reduce the burden on collection and free up time for what matters most (delivering and continuously improving the quality of care).
- ❖ Provide transparent and predictable data collection requirements and demonstrate use of the data to improve services and outcomes.
- ❖ Safely, securely and routinely integrate data to enable person-centred insights and evidence-informed decisions.
- ❖ Ensure access to the right data when it's needed (from data that informs individual choices about care to data that drives aged care service and system-wide improvements).
- ❖ Recognise the important role of the data strategy in supporting improvements to digital interoperability across aged care and related service settings (particularly health) and ICT capability in the aged care sector.
- ❖ Recognise the vital role of the aged care workforce in delivering the aged care data strategy and the supporting role of aged care software vendors in implementing new data standards into their products.

## Guiding principles

The draft presented to stakeholders during the first round of consultation included high-level guiding principles for discussion (these and other draft elements are shown in Appendix 1). The Guiding principles must underpin and be evident in the implementation of the data strategy, but stakeholders highlighted the need for the guiding principles to be less generic and more aspirational.

In response, we propose the following Guiding principles for the data strategy:

- ❖ We recognise that older people are at the centre of aged care
- ❖ We recognise that data users and their needs are diverse. They include older Australians, aged care workers and service providers, technology vendors, governments and researchers
- ❖ We consider the purpose of data collection and communicate this to data providers and users
- ❖ We utilise data standards to promote harmonisation across the aged care and associated systems
- ❖ We safeguard trust, privacy, and security
- ❖ We leverage and connect existing data assets and capabilities so that we collect data once and share it often
- ❖ We minimise burden for frontline workers so they can focus on providing high-quality care
- ❖ We continually reflect on our practices, highlight our successes, and embrace accountability so we can learn and build a data system that continually improves.



# Vision

An aged care data system that effectively collects, secures, uses and shares information to support the provision of high-quality care that maximises the health and wellbeing of older Australians.

## Purpose and intended benefits

### What do we want to achieve?

To create an aged care data system that empowers older Australians, supports service providers to provide high-quality care, enables the government's stewardship of the sector, and facilitates access to meaningful information.

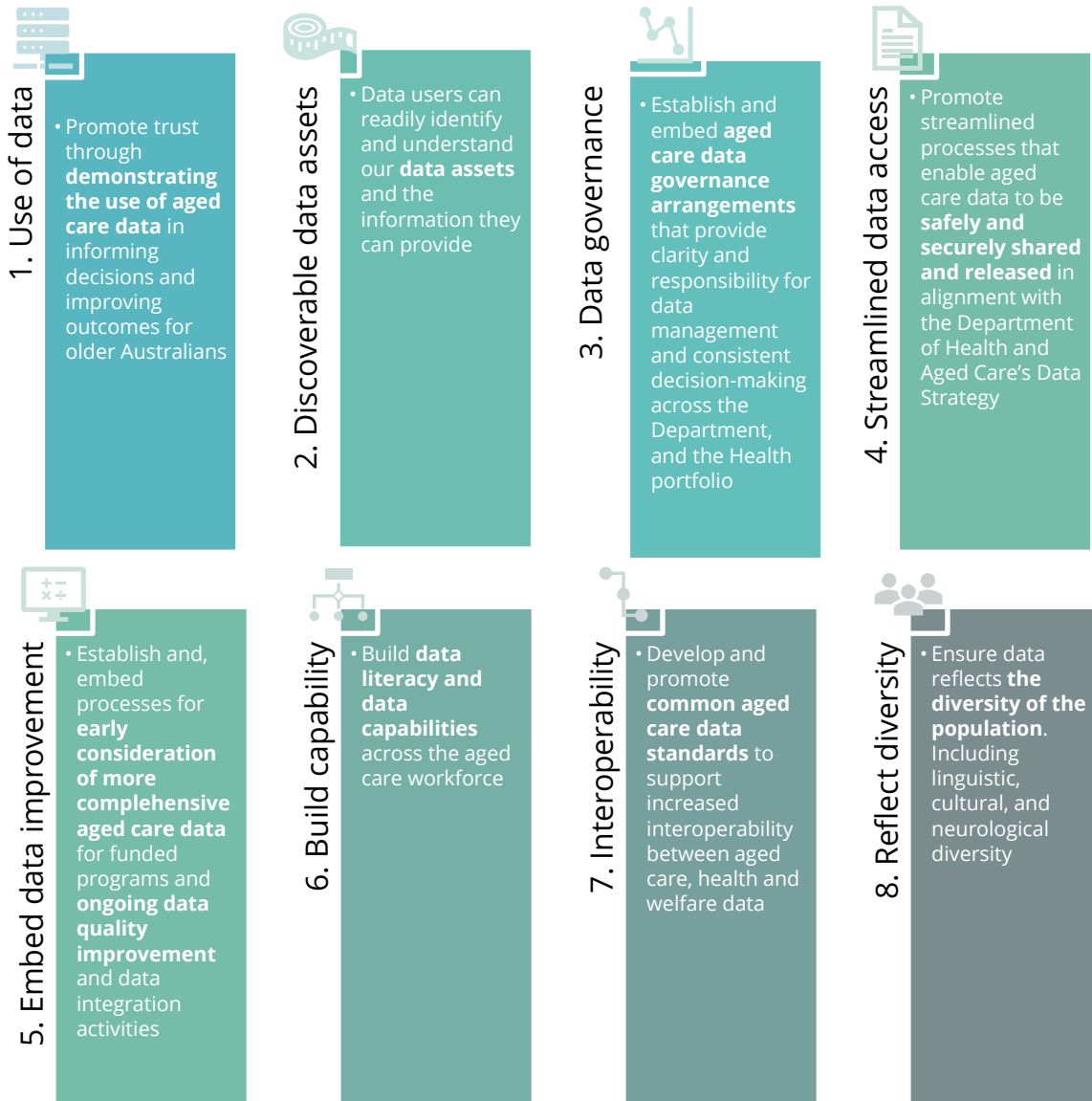
### What are the intended benefits?

Data user	Benefits
<b>People</b> <i>using aged care</i>	Older people, their families, carers and support networks have access to information to make informed choices about aged care and that informs their understanding of the quality of care they receive. Unnecessary repetition in data collection is minimised.
<b>Workers</b> <i>providing care</i>	The workforce spend less time collecting and reporting data and the workforce have the time and capability to use data to inform practice.
<b>Service providers</b> <i>delivering care</i>	Providers have access to timely information that supports them to improve the quality of care they provide. Providers understand their data collection and reporting obligations.
<b>Technology vendors</b> <i>supporting care</i>	Vendors can support providers with software based on clear and consistent data standards and specifications.
<b>Governments</b> <i>managing and regulating the system</i>	Governments can effectively design, administer and evaluate performance of the aged care system. Governments can identify trends in the aged care sector and respond to address them. Governments are equipped with timely information and provide clear guidance to the sector on aged care priorities.  The regulator is supported to effectively and efficiently detect and respond to the risk of harm to consumers to incentivise the delivery of quality and safe care.
<b>Researchers</b> <i>generating insights</i>	Experts can easily identify better data, and rapidly access it to conduct research that provides insights and informs improvements in the aged care system.

# Strategic priorities

Stakeholders have highlighted the importance of prioritising data governance, workforce data literacy and capability, data on clinical and care needs, safety and quality of care, workforce and diversity of people using aged care, and data standardisation and harmonisation.

The following eight strategic priorities are proposed to support the vision, purpose and outcomes of the data strategy.



# Implementation plan

The Implementation plan (the Plan) will underpin this strategy by providing a time-based view of the concrete actions that will be carried out for each strategic priority. It will detail how data improvement activities will strengthen our aged care data system.

It will be a separate living document to the data strategy, developed through engagement with stakeholders and informed by Government-committed deliverables and responses to the Royal Commission.

# Glossary

**Aged Care National Minimum Data Set:** A core set of standardised data items agreed for mandatory national collation about aged care.

**Aged care sector:** encompasses service providers and their workers, including nurses, personal care workers, allied health professionals and axillary staff, that support older Australians through aged care services to address care needs in both home based and residential aged care settings.

**Data governance:** relates to the more limited (but no less important) set of arrangements that underpin ethical, legal, secure, safe, efficient and timely transfer and sharing of data.

**Data standards:** can be thought of as a set of rules used to standardise the way data are collected and statistics are produced. They describe the expected meaning and acceptable representation of data for use within a defined context.

**Data system governance:** relates to the arrangements that regulate decision making about ongoing development of the data system as a whole, where the data system comprises the comprehensive range of data related to aged care in Australia, and the arrangements that support capture, use and sharing of these data.

**National Aged Care Data Asset:** A multi-source enduring linked data set that integrates people-centred data related to aged care.