



**The Office of the
Aged Care Commissioner**

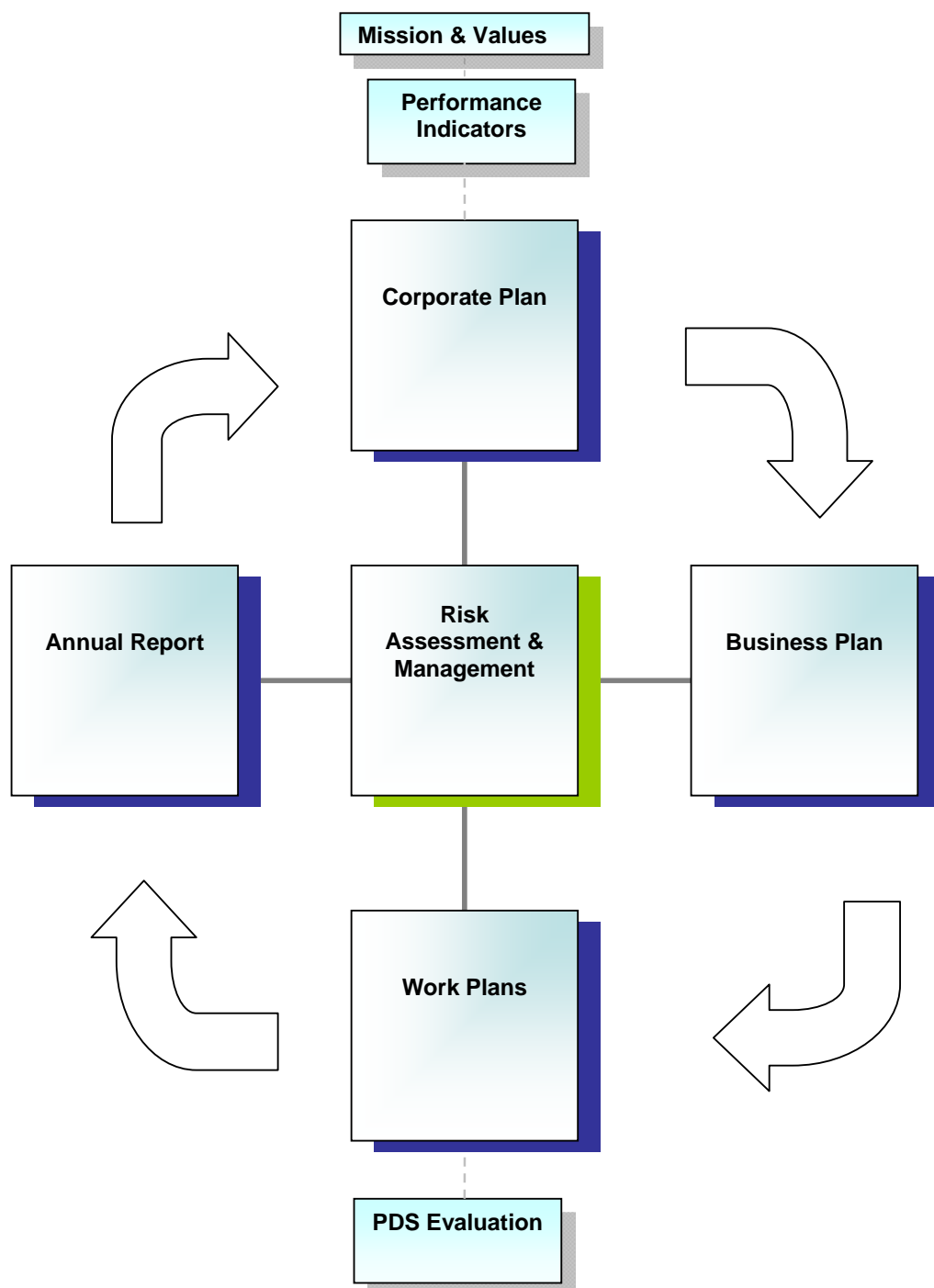
**Corporate Plan
2007-2010**

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Corporate Plan

The Office of the Aged Care Commissioner (the Office) has developed its Corporate Plan covering the period 2007-2010 to fulfil the functions of the Aged Care Commissioner as set out in the legislation. Prior to 1 May 2007 the Office supported the Commissioner for Complaints and, in part, this plan builds on the work of that Office. The Corporate Plan is in concert with the agreed mission statement and values of the Office and forms the basis of work plans for the team and individual officers.



Background

The Aged Care Commissioner holds a statutory appointment and is independent of the Department of Health and Ageing. Section 95A-1(2) of the *Aged Care Act 1997* identifies the functions of the Aged Care Commissioner as follows:

- (a) *To examine decisions that are made by the Secretary under the Investigation Principles and are identified by those Principles as being examinable by the Aged Care Commissioner, and make recommendations to the Secretary arising from the examination;*
- (b) *To examine complaints made to the Aged Care Commissioner about the Secretary's processes for handling matters under the Investigation Principles, and make recommendations to the Secretary arising from the examination;*
- (c) *To examine, on the Aged Care Commissioner's own initiative the Secretary's processes for handling matters under the Investigation Principles, and make recommendations to the Secretary arising from the examination;*
- (d) *To examine complaints made to the Aged Care Commissioner about :*
 - (i) *The conduct of an accreditation body relating to its responsibilities under the Accreditation Grant Principles: or*
 - (ii) *The conduct of a person carrying out an audit, or making a support contact under those Principles; (but not a complaint about the merits of a decision under those Principles), and make recommendations to the accreditation body concerned arising from the examination;*
- (e) *To examine, on the Aged Care Commissioner's own initiative:*
 - (i) *The conduct of an accreditation body relating to its responsibilities under the Accreditation Grant Principles: or*
 - (ii) *The conduct of a person carrying out an audit, or making a support contact under those Principles; (but not a complaint about the merits of a decision under those Principles), and make recommendations to the accreditation body concerned arising from the examination;*
- (f) *To advise the Minister, at the Minister's request, about matters relating to any of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e);*
- (g) *The functions (if any) specified in the Investigation Principles.*

The aim of the Office is to provide an independent, effective and free review mechanism and a free system for investigating concerns from people who complain about the processes of either the Office of Aged Care Quality and Compliance (OACQAC) or the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency (the Agency) or a person conducting an audit or support visit under the Accreditation Grant Principles.

The Complaints Investigation Scheme (the Scheme) is located within OACQAC in each DoHA State/Territory office. While staff are directly responsible to their respective State/Territory managers, OACQAC Central Office Canberra is responsible for policy decisions in relation to complaint handling as well as the overall day to day management of the Scheme.

The Agency is an independent company limited by guarantee, established under the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, and subject to the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*. It is the body appointed by the Department of Health and Ageing as the accreditation body under the *Aged Care Act 1997*. The Agency operates through a national office with additional offices located in each jurisdiction

This Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the strategies and actions outlined remain relevant.

Planning Assumptions

- The Commissioner's statutory obligations will continue in their current form.
- Stakeholders will expect and value high standards of service and accountability.
- Stakeholders will require detailed information and reporting.

The Office supports strategic planning as a tool to identify necessary change and to plan for and manage that change. The strategic planning process is based on a number of elements derived from our Mission Statement and Principle Objectives and the legislative responsibilities of the Aged Care Commissioner. The initial work plan incorporates the setting up of the new Office structures, communication and management systems as well as setting out a vision for the Office and providing an ambitious list of core strategies, as well as short and long term actions to achieve the vision.

Mission Statement

Through an effective office of review improve the quality of aged care services by promoting excellence in complaint handling and public administration

Principle Objectives

- Integrity and independence at all times
- Courtesy and respect in dealing with all people contacting the Office
- Manage complaints and reviews by adopting a style of working that brings together honesty, reliability, transparency, impartiality and the principles of natural justice
- Fair reasonable and credible decisions
- Informed decision making supported by collated, analysed and reported data
- Equality of access and the delivery of an effective and quality service
- Accountability in our actions through complying with the Aged Care Act and administrative law.

Comprehensive management systems are in place to support the achievement of the aims of the Office, the Mission Statement and Principle Objectives. The Office also has systems in place to manage risks to an assessed and realistic level, to safeguard the use of public funds and to ensure accountability for the stewardship of those resources.

Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of their rights, including the right to make a complaint. This Office sees complaints as an opportunity to improve the quality of aged care services that are subsidised by the Commonwealth and State Governments and the quality of service provided by OACQAC and the Agency. Over time the office has observed a shift in the attitude of aged care providers. Many now see complaints as an important aspect of continuous improvement processes and there is a greater focus on achieving resolution at the local level.

We have also noted the diverse expectations and varying levels of confidence in aged care complaint handling and accreditation organisations. If we are to share our experience and learnings with these organisations it is important that we continue to engage with providers, consumers and their communities and at the same time maintain our focus on service quality.

The Office has developed a set of strategies to achieve the organisations objectives to fulfil the requirements set out in the legislation.

Strategy 1

To broaden and enhance our understanding of and leadership in complaints management and public administrations.

Supporting Actions

In order to fulfil this strategy we will:

- Participate in ongoing education and training.
- Maintain dynamic networks and open dialogue with stakeholders and peers.
- Collate and analyse national and international information and best practice initiatives.

Strategy 2

To deliver high quality and consistent services .

Supporting Actions

In order to fulfil this strategy we will:

- Maintain integrity by treating everyone with courtesy, dignity and respect and by remaining independent, impartial and honest.
- Maintain accountability by performing all duties in a timely, responsive and responsible manner.
- Maintain a quality assurance strategy. Establish, review and refine performance measures. Measure our work and issue reports on a sound analysis of the data.
- Promote equality of access for all persons.
- Promote fairness, equity, clarity and consistency.
- Exercise our judgement independently and foster public trust and confidence

Strategy 3

To foster accountability and competence in public administration and in the management and reporting of complaints.

Supporting Actions

In order to fulfil this strategy we will:

- Promote the principles of natural justice and administrative law in the handling of complaints.
- Identify issues which point to poor administrative practice and make recommendations to correct the situation.
- Encourage an effective and cooperative relationship between the Office, OACQAC and ACSAA, nationally and in each jurisdiction.
- Undertake fair and thorough investigations
- Utilise reports to identify and address the underlying causes of complaints.
- Provide thematic feedback on performance of OACQAC and the Agency in each jurisdiction.
- Support the collection and analysis of data through comprehensive records and data management systems.
- Produce high quality and transparent decisions and reports.

Strategy 4

To manage workloads in the most efficient and fair manner possible, having regard for our statutory mandate and available resources

Supporting Actions

In order to fulfil this strategy we will:

- Employ the requisite number of staff to meet our obligations in an efficient and effective manner.
- Promote the development of skills and organisational structures to enhance complaint handling and process reviews.
- Use technology appropriately to manage information, identify trends and facilitate timely responses and reports.
- Regularly triage and review workloads.
- Use good will and work in cooperation and consultation with others to develop policies and guidelines to facilitate consistency and ease of complaint handling.

Strategy 5

To maintain high morale in the workplace through effective communication and adherence to our mission statement and principle objectives.

Supporting Actions

In order to fulfil this strategy we will:

- Value diversity of experience and the various skills of people who have a unity of purpose and commitment to success.
- Acknowledge all efforts and achievements.
- Provide opportunities for ongoing education.
- Recognise stress and provide support.

Strategy 6

To promote the reputation of the Office, broaden the public profile, and sustain client satisfaction.

Supporting Actions

In order to fulfil this strategy we will:

- Make it easy for people to do business with us.
- Work towards a high level of public awareness.
- Maintain and improve our website.
- Provide a range of explanatory information, multilingual brochures and fact sheets.
- Increase opportunities to meet industry and consumer groups.

Performance

Stakeholders	Expectation
Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability in meeting statutory obligations • Effective management of resources to deliver outcomes • Comprehensive and timely reports
Complainants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency and fairness • Clear and timely advice
Respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural fairness
Central Organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Health & Ageing • Aged Care Standards & Accreditation Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting is accurate, timely and comprehensive • Reporting trends and issues in managing complaints • Compliance with the Aged Care legislation and the principles of administrative law
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive & open communications on activities

Key Success Factors

- Number of complaints recorded and managed about:
 - OACQAC
 - ACSAA
- Number and percentage of acknowledgement letters sent within 3 days
- Number and percentage of Level 1 complaints finalised within 3 days
- Number and percentage of Level 2 complaints finalised within 14 days
- Number and percentage of Level 3 complaints finalised within 30 days
- Number and percentage of Level 4 complaints finalised within 30 days
- Number and percentage of Level 5 complaints finalised within 45 days
- Number and percentage of Level 6 complaints finalised within 60 days
- Number and percentage of own motion investigations commenced and finalised
- Number and percentage of reviews finalised within 60 days
 - Cease investigating (Type A)
 - Decision there is no breach (Type A)
 - Decision not to issue NRA (Type A)
 - Decision there is a breach (AP)
 - NRA content terms and conditions (Type A and AP)
 - Decision to issue NRA (AP)
- Number of formal meetings and speaking engagements undertaken by Commissioner and staff