

Mr Patrick Cummings
SkillsIQ Limited

By email: patrick.cummings@skillsiq.com.au

Dear Mr Cummings

Re Australian College of Nursing feedback to Individual Support, Ageing and Disability - Draft 1 consultation

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) would like to thank SkillsIQ for the opportunity to provide feedback to the **Individual Support, Ageing and Disability - Draft 1 consultation (February – March 2021)**. As the pre-eminent and national leader of the nursing profession, ACN is committed to providing system-wide strategies that safeguard Australia's vulnerable ageing population from risks when accessing aged care services; and is keen to pursue novel approaches that will assist the aged care sector into the future. ACN's commitment to Australia's Senior Australians is demonstrated with the establishment of ACN's Healthy Ageing Community of Interest and Ageing Policy Chapter; ACN's membership with the National Aged Care Alliance; the establishment of the ACN Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Expert Advisory Group; submissions to aged care inquiries including the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety; and the development of position statements^{1,2} and white papers^{3,4} addressing the complex care needs of Senior Australians.

With roughly 70% of the aged care workforce made up of support workers⁵, ACN has expressed this is of concern considering that an increasing number of elderly people entering the aged care sector are presenting with more complex care needs with many requiring end of life care. People living in RACFs more commonly have co-morbidities,

¹ Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2021, 'The role of nurses in supporting older people to access quality, safe aged care', ACN, Canberra. <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-role-of-nurses-in-supporting-older-people.pdf>

² Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2020, 'Optimising Person- and Family-Centred End-of-Life Care during COVID-19 – Position Statement', ACN, Canberra. <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-optimising-end-of-life-care-during-pandemic.pdf>

³ Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2016, Nurses are Essential in Health and Aged Care Reform, ACN, Canberra. <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/white-paper-nurses-essential-health-aged-care-reform.pdf>

⁴ Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2019, 'Achieving Quality Palliative Care for All: The Essential Role of Nurses—A White Paper by ACN 2019', ACN, Canberra. <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/white-paper-end-of-life-care-achieving-quality-palliative-care-for-all.pdf>

⁵ Australian Government Department of Health. 2016 National Aged Care Workforce Census and Survey – The Aged Care Workforce, 2016. <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-06/CTH.0001.1001.2805.pdf>

chronic disease and multiple medications; and 75% of people in RACFs are known to be 85 or older. The complex care required by residents can only be provided under the direct supervision of a Registered Nurse (RN). ACN does not intend to undermine the value of the support worker workforce, however in the interest of patient safety advocates for at least one RN to be available on shift and available to supervise support workers at all times; and that support workers should never be substituted for RNs or Enrolled Nurses (ENs)⁶.

ACN is keen to see support workers equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to competently work within their scope of training and practice with Senior Australians in their own homes or in residential aged care facilities. ACN provides further information in response to specific consultation questions in the attached document.

ACN is the pre-eminent and national leader of the nursing profession. We are committed to our intent of advancing nurse leadership to enhance health care. ACN is committed to ensuring that Australia's health system can meet the needs of all Australians, especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

If you have any questions in relation to ACN's responses, please contact Dr Carolyn Stapleton FACN at carolyn.stapleton@acn.edu.au.

Yours sincerely



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Director of Policy, Strategy and Advocacy
Australian College of Nursing

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⁶ Australian College of Nursing (ACN). 2020, 'Unregulated Health Care Workers – Position Statement', ACN, Canberra. <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-unregulated-health-care-workers.pdf>