

## Industry endorsed solution increasing transparency in aged care sector

Key players from within Australia's aged care industry have come together in a show of support for and to endorse increased transparency and the delivery of better outcomes for both consumers and providers with the signing of Affiliate Agreements.

Older Australians and their loved ones are now able to use new online solutions where they can find and compare services (including price) as well as being able to comment on their service experiences. Aged care providers are now able to present what they offer and where, as well as make comment back on what consumers have said.

The Agreements - instigated by multi platform media company DPS Publishing (DPS) and signed by aged care peak bodies Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA), Aged Care Industry Association (ACIA) and Leading Age Services Australia (LASA); as well as leading seniors advocacy group COTA Australia (Council on the Ageing), are all about working collaboratively into the future to ensure consumers are better informed when making care choices, as well as opening up the conversation between consumers and providers to create a transparent aged care sector.

Something the Affiliates hope to achieve through their work together is to continually improve and expand the [Consumer Ratings](#) and [Compare Provider](#) tools launched by DPS earlier this year, which have been supported by the Government through Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Ken Wyatt.

DPS say they are very excited to be working with the Affiliates, with Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mark Ogden highlighting that initiatives like these are needed "now more so than ever" to enable the transparency that consumers are demanding in the sector.

"There have been recent announcements by Government including the Royal Commission and the new Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission that will help speed up the required change in the sector," Mr Ogden explains.

"However we know consumers will still want information about aged care, and we know they respond best to a combination of both Government and independent solutions."

"This is why our solutions are so important, as they complement the Government initiatives by not only making it easier for everyone to share their own experiences of aged care, in a safe and meaningful way to give everyone a voice when it is needed - good, bad or indifferent, but also to be able to compare their options like they have never been able to do before."

Mr Ogden says he sees DPS' solutions, delivered in partnership with Care Opinion Australia, as solutions for both the industry and its consumers and adds that partnering with the key industry players will result in the best outcomes and greater transparency.

“These Affiliate Agreements formalise the ways of working between DPS and the key consumer advocates and industry peak bodies on these initiatives - the core principles of the initiatives are agreed that must be upheld to maintain the endorsement from those involved in the Affiliate program,” he says.

“We each bring core areas of expertise and specialisation that complement each other, delivering a superior outcome enabled by this collaboration.

“Plus we work collaboratively together to continually improve these solutions to generate even more value for consumers and providers into the future.

“We are all very excited for what this Agreement will bring because we truly believe these solutions can have a real positive impact on the aged care industry in Australia.”

COTA Australia Chief Executive Ian Yates welcomed Aged Care Guide’s solution that will deliver increased information on consumer experience of all aged care providers across the country while providing an opportunity for consumers to better understand the cost of each provider.

“The Aged Care Guide tools are the first opportunity for older Australians to both compare provider prices and read reviews of consumers before deciding which provider best suits their needs,” Mr Yates says.

“COTA research shows that reviewing Consumer Experience of existing users is one of the most sought after pieces of information consumers want to see.

“We’re pleased to endorse the Aged Care Guide solution and thank them for their collaborative approach to the system design.”

ACSA, who represent predominantly not-for-profit aged care providers, said there is an increasing need and demand from consumers for transparency in aged care and providers also want to open up to the community to improve confidence in their services.

“This initiative enables consumers and their families to have a say about experiences of their care and is another important opportunity for providers to have an honest, direct and interactive relationship with them,” ACSA CEO Pat Sparrow says.

“This platform will also support and open up the broader community conversation and understanding about aged care services.”

Fellow aged care peak body Leading Age Services Australia (LASA), who represent not for profit, for profit and government providers across residential, home care and retirement living, have also endorsed the initiative.

“It’s pleasing to see our Affiliate DPS Publishing leading this initiative,” LASA CEO Sean Rooney said.

“The industry can only benefit from consumer-driven information that will help drive improvements to the quality and diversity of age services across the board.”

Federal Minister for Senior Australians and Aged Care Ken Wyatt welcomes the partnership and dedication to improving the sector forged by the Affiliate Agreement.

“DPS Publishing and their Aged Care Guide play a very important role in the aged care information ecosystem in Australia,” Minister Wyatt says.

“It is great to see initiatives like this from the private sector, in particular that DPS has worked collaboratively with the key industry and consumer associations in the aged care sector - a great initiative by them.

“These tools can not only help increase transparency in the sector, which consumers are demanding, but also help providers proactively respond to consumer feedback.”

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Attached image caption: DPS CEO Mark Ogden with COTA CEO Ian Yates, ACSA CEO Pat Sparrow and Care Opinion CEO Michael Greco at the NACA Meeting in Adelaide.

More information, interviews and additional photography/film opportunities are also available on request by contacting:

DPS: Mark Ogden 0419 330 193 [mark.ogden@dps.com.au](mailto:mark.ogden@dps.com.au)

ACSA: Emily Parkinson 0420 390 031 [Emily.Parkinson@acsa.asn.au](mailto:Emily.Parkinson@acsa.asn.au)

COTA: Ian Yates 0418 835 439 [iyates@cota.org.au](mailto:iyates@cota.org.au) (or alternatively Jenny Stokes 0478 504 280)

LASA: David O’Sullivan 0427 138 024 [davido@lasa.asn.au](mailto:davido@lasa.asn.au)