



AUSTRALIAN TECHNOLOGY IMPROVING LIVES OF RESIDENTS IN AGED CARE

An Australian innovation is providing a solution to the problems identified by the Aged Care Royal Commission in the delivery of safe, high quality and efficient residential aged care.

A two-year independent evaluation by the University of Canberra (UoC) found the new technology frees up 20 per cent of the time nurses and carers spend on paperwork, so it can be diverted to patient care.

The study of the ACE system, developed by Canberra-based technology firm Humanetix, found it improves the care of aged care residents by enabling nurses and carers to spend more time with patients, rather than on administration.

ACE is a point-of-care documentation, decision-support and clinical workflow IT system that supports staff care delivery for Residential Aged Care residents.

The University of Canberra's Associate Professor Kasia Bail said their independent study shines a light for the first time on exactly what nurses and other carers in residential aged care facilities spend their precious time doing.

"It highlights not only the ability of technology to help nurses focus on care, but also the potential it has for improving practice over time," Associate Professor Bail said.

Humanetix Founder Matt Darling said the Aged Care Royal Commission recommended that by July next year, aged care recipients should receive at least 200 minutes per day of care time.

"Sadly, such a benchmark is rarely met, and we know that many nurses are of the view that the most time-consuming part of their job is documentation and administration," Mr Darling said.

"This is where ACE comes in. The independent UoC study confirmed our system allows nurses and carers to spend significantly more time with residents, to improve the quality of care and to provide better data about the care residents receive.

"This is the type of innovation which can free up nurse time and provide quality-assured care with transparency and accountability."

The UoC study found ACE addresses those critical staff and skills shortage issues identified by the Royal Commission.

A 20 per cent increase in staff productivity gives each care worker an extra 96 minutes per shift and is the equivalent of adding an extra 15 full time care staff in a typical 150 bed home.

Across the sector, that is equivalent to increasing staff in residential aged care by about 5,000 full-time nurses and 14,000 full-time carers.

The value of this productivity gain in nurse time is over \$900m per annum nationally in direct wage costs alone in a sector which the Royal Commission noted is facing a critical staff and skills shortage. This gain will allow a significant redeployment of staff time into care.

ACE has been operating for nearly two years at the Jindalee Aged Care Residence, a 170-bed facility in Canberra.

Owner of the Jindalee Aged Care Residence Gary Johnson said the UoC evaluation found Jindalee was a well-run and staffed facility with a high standard of care and resident satisfaction.

"With the installation of ACE, Jindalee now has unmatched quality assurance and an even greater understanding of each resident's needs and preferences," Mr Johnson said.



Council of the Ageing Chief Executive Ian Yates said the results demonstrate that improving care for older Australians won't be achieved by just throwing money at the problem.

"We not only need adequate resources, but also tested systems-based solutions that ensure the people caring for our elderly have the tools and support they need to do their jobs effectively," Mr Yates said.

"The Government is to be commended for demonstrating what is possible using an innovative Australian technology."

The increased care time means a better resident experience. In particular, staff have time to address health issues before the resident's condition deteriorates. This is better for the resident and delivers downstream savings in the health system by avoiding more costly treatments in hospitals and other clinics.

Minister Hunt and then Aged Care Minister Wyatt decided to back a detailed evaluation of this technology following extensive overseas and local evaluation confirming its unique capabilities. The project was evaluated by the Department of Health before proceeding and its execution was then overseen by the Department.

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