## Concept Note: ACA Small and Medium Providers Feedback Forum

Introduction

As the peak body for the aged residential care sector in the country, the Aged Care Association recognises that we have a diverse membership, from large providers in predominately urban areas to small providers in rural and regional townships. We also acknowledge that while many of the challenges for the sector affect all our members, the solutions to these challenges often require varied solutions depending on the size, the circumstance and geographical location of the facility.

Large and small providers face many of the same challenges and many different ones. Our aim is to understand providers’ unique challenges in the evolving policy and regulatory landscape. We know these challenges are compounded by the increasing demand for services, rising operational costs, and the pressure to maintain high-quality care standards within a changing regulatory framework.

We propose the formation of a feedback forum for small and medium (SAM) providers. This group will provide a platform for open dialogue between the ACA and small to medium ARC providers to understand their challenges and promote knowledge-sharing. We already have communication channels within our large provider members and will continue to seek their input on the issues for large providers.

Objectives

The key objectives of the Feedback forum for SAM providers are:

1. **Identify key policy and regulatory challenges:** Gather insights into the specific policy, regulatory, and day-to-day operational challenges that SAM ARC providers face.
2. **Broaden industry voices in advocacy efforts:** Ensure that the voice of all our members are heard in policy discussions and advocacy efforts, particularly in relation to funding, workforce development, and regulatory requirements.
3. **Facilitate dialogue and collaboration:** Identify opportunities for constructive dialogue between small to medium ARC providers, policymakers, and regulatory authorities, helping to identify practical solutions and support ongoing improvements in the sector.
4. **Develop policy recommendations:** Based on group discussions, develop evidence-based policy recommendations and advocacy strategies in the interest of the wider sector.

Structure and Composition

The ACA feedback forum for SAM providers will consist of representatives from small to medium ARC providers across New Zealand, including both for-profit and not-for-profit entities. The group will be facilitated by our organisation, ensuring that it remains a neutral and inclusive space for all participants. The composition of the group will be as follows:

* **Members / Provider Representatives:** Small to medium ARC providers, ideally representing a mix of regional and urban perspectives. Participation in the group would be on an ad-hoc basis.
* **Secretariat support:** ACA Senior Policy Advisor

Methodology

The SAM forum will operate through regular meetings, both in person and virtually, and targeted consultations with sector stakeholders. The format of the meetings will include:

1. **Inception meeting:** An introductory meeting where providers can share their expectations from the group. This will set the stage for identifying key themes and priorities for discussion in subsequent meetings.
2. **Focused topic sessions:** Regular discussions focusing on specific issues, such as funding models, workforce shortages, regulatory compliance, quality assurance, and delivery models among others.
3. **Focus group discussions:** Occasional focus group discussions, as required, to develop actionable policy recommendations to feed into ACA’s submission on public consultation documents.
4. **Annual review:** An annual review to assess the impact of the group’s work, identify emerging challenges, and recalibrate focus areas as necessary for the upcoming year.

Expected outcomes

* A clearer understanding of the specific policy and regulatory barriers faced by small to medium ARC providers.
* Better representation of the experiences of small to medium providers in policy submissions and advocacy efforts.
* Facilitate knowledge-sharing within the sector.

Contact information

For further information or to express your interest in participating, please write to:

Sneha Pillai, Senior Policy Advisor, ACA at sneha@nzaca.org.nz