

31 January 2025

PFO: Former Service Improvement and Innovation

Submission on the Te Whatu Ora change proposal to the interRAI team

The Aged Care Association has serious concerns about the impact of staff reductions in the interRAI team.

If the proposed changes are implemented, we expect negative impacts to be felt in the aged care sector through disruptions to training, data collection and system support.

Current issues faced by the aged care sector in terms of wait times and delays will be exacerbated, and the potential for improvements will be reduced.

The Aged Care Association does not support any reduction of staff within the interRAI team.

Training and support

- The proposal aims to "optimise the delivery and cost-effectiveness of interRAI education, support and software services". However, the reduction in roles, particularly those focused on education and support, will lead to challenges in providing these services.
- The disestablishment of **Education and Support Team Leaders, and Education & Competency Managers** will impact the quality and accessibility of training for aged care staff who use interRAI assessments, with downstream impacts on the funding available for the level of care required for residents
- With fewer staff dedicated to training, there is a risk that the quality of assessments may decline, which could have implications for care planning and funding decisions.
- With staff turnover of 33 percent and over 70 percent of our workforce on visas, it is vital that there is a team with the capacity to provide consistent and constant training and support to our members.

System functionality

- The proposal states that the interRAI software service will be underpinned by expertise and product support. However, the reduction in **System Clinician roles** from 3.6 to 2 will severely limit the ability to provide hands-on support to clinicians using the system.
- The loss of the **GM interRAI Service** will affect strategic decision-making and overall management of the service, and we see the loss of this specialist leadership position resulting in leading to inconsistencies and delays in system improvements.

Data quality

- interRAI assessments are crucial for care planning and resource allocation in the aged care sector. A reduction in staff providing training and support may result in less consistent use of the assessment tools, impacting the reliability and accuracy of the data collected.

Implications for the aged residential care sector

- **Workload:** Fewer interRAI staff may result in a greater workload for remaining staff, and may also result in reduced or delayed support to aged care facilities.
- **Assessment time:** A reduction in support staff for interRAI may impact the time it takes to conduct assessments and to train new staff in their use, impacting the efficiency and responsiveness of facilities. This is especially problematic as the interRAI assessments are already time-consuming.
- **Consistency:** Reductions to the team could impact the consistency of assessment practice across the aged care sector, leading to inconsistencies in resident care plans and funding allocations.