

Aged care in Australia; care, dignity & respect

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The Royal Commission into Aged Care
emphasises a clear need for “*placing people at
the centre of aged care*”.

Source: Commonwealth, Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Final Report (2021)

“At least 1 in 3 people accessing residential care and home care services have experienced substandard care”

Source: Commonwealth, Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, Final Report (2021)

A national snapshot...

Aged care is not a single service

People typically associate 'Aged Care' with nursing or residential care, when Aged Care is not one single service.

It's a range of programs and services that can vary from low-level support services to more intensive specialised care.

Demographics are shifting

Australia's population is ageing, in less than 40 years adults aged 85+ will increase from 515,700 to more than 1.5 million.

An increase in our aged population combined with a steady decline in our working age population will result in fewer people in the aged care workforce and put pressure on its funding with less people available to pay taxes.

The people perspective

The systems and guidelines of the past have moulded a one-size-fits-all approach to aged care, that has resulted in the exclusions and alienation of many people who seek its assistance.

There is an opportunity to listen and leverage the voices of those receiving, planning & providing, and engaging with care services to ensure people are no longer cut off from necessary care.

We want to **work together** to make sure that the solutions implemented are designed with *people, providers, and longevity* in mind.

What opportunity spaces can services providers explore to help make a positive impact on our futures?

Shaping a way forward

1. Changing perspectives
2. Fostering abilities
3. Evolving care
4. Empowering employees

1. Changing perspectives

We need to change how we think, feel and act towards age and ageing.

How can communities encourage empathetic intergenerational connections?

Changing perspectives

Ageism has been identified as a systemic nation-wide problem. Negative attitudes and assumptions about older people and aged care can affect a person's health as they age, and the way an individual delivers aged care services.

Engaging with communities to foster intergenerational solidarity and update societal mindsets is a step forward in eliminating negative stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination based on age.

Empathy suit helps understand ageing

MIT AgeLab developed the AGNES body suit (Age Gain Now Empathy System) to allow people designing products, services and spaces to understand what it feels like to age.

“Because ageing happens gradually, older adults often have created a work-around to solve problems, in order to remain independent and accomplish the tasks they have always done – that means that in research, people don’t always report what is difficult or challenging..”

The simulator suit makes everything harder:

- elastics connected the arms and waist restrict movement above shoulder height,
- a neck brace means a simple head turn becomes a full body movement,
- yellow tinted glasses lower vision quality,
- ear plugs affect sound quality,
- shoes cause imbalance,
- And gloves decrease tactile sensations and grip strength.

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Old person's home for 4 year olds

A five part unscripted tv series 'Old person's home for 4 year olds' was a heartwarming experiment designed to understand if intergenerational interaction can improve the health and wellbeing of older people.

Each episode explored a different theme:

- Loneliness & friendships
- Remembrance
- Mood & depression
- Confidence & mobility,
- and Impact (the results)

The benefits of the interaction between the older and younger participants in the experiment were revealed in the series final - intergenerational play can slow cognitive decline & the onset of dementia, and enhances physical wellbeing for older people. For younger people the undivided attention of an older adult lead to increases in confidence, vocabulary and social skills.



2. Fostering abilities

We need to make sure that businesses can promote older people's abilities

How can businesses evolve existing internal structures to upskill and benefit from older peoples abilities?

Fostering abilities

Aged-based discrimination is on the rise, with two-thirds of individuals aged 45-74 reporting they've experienced aged related discrimination. Along with the societal misconception that people aged 60+ should retire, has lead to hostile working environments for some older Australians. The reality is that there are individuals over 60 who either don't want to retire, or don't have the funds to - a large percentage of those are women.

Collaborating with service providers, businesses, and community organisations will uncover opportunities to connect with older people and understand how we can learn from and foster peoples abilities.

A new spin on internal mentoring

Investment management company BlackRock introduce 'Reverse Mentoring' a program that highlights the benefits of two-way learning.

Younger employees are mentoring older employees in newer technology allowing older employees to work more efficiently and understand emerging client demands. While younger employees receive a more stereotypical mentoring from someone with experience within the company.

The Senior Managing Director and Global Head of Corporate Strategy, Geraldine Buckingham mentioned two key factors in a successful reverse mentoring program:

1. Pairing the right people - those open to new ideas and willing to learn, and enthusiastic mentors who want to share their knowledge.
2. Talking about the program internally - sharing stories and success from the program, and getting everyone interested and excited.



3. Evolving care

We need to enable ageing in place, and provide access to long-term care for those in need

What does a people-centred aged care model look like?

Evolving care

Expectations of ageing and aged living differ considerably from person to person. The aged care journey for older people is frequently associated with feelings of loss of autonomy and choice, fear, and a lack of control.

There is a need to explore how to empower older people, families, and medical practitioners to have conversations about ageing and aged living in order to plan ahead to enable ageing in place or transition into long-term care.

There are many countries around the world are perfecting this care method:

- **Denmark** has a focus on at-home care, utilising assessment co-ordinators or 'event planners' who assess the individual needs of a person, the appropriate services they require which are delivered by the council. Local care workers report back to planners and conduct yearly reports.
- **New Zealand** has created a network of care centred around residential aged care living with users able to access necessary services within a village, and although needs may fluctuate users remain within a familiar environment

Communal living with privacy

A safe, affordable, secure home for older women to live privately and with dignity as they age.

The homes incorporate key essential home elements - residents have their own kitchen, bedroom, outdoor greenery, and privacy. While central communal spaces like garden pavilions provide residents the opportunity to come together for socialisation - sharing meals, evening drinks, games, or a chat over a cup of tea.

The homes are designed for ageing in place - wide doorways, wheelchair access, and positioned closed to public transport, shops, and medical facilities.



4. Empowering employees

We need understand and learn from aged care employees to implement change.

How can aged care providers translate staff feedback into actionable insights?

Empowering employees

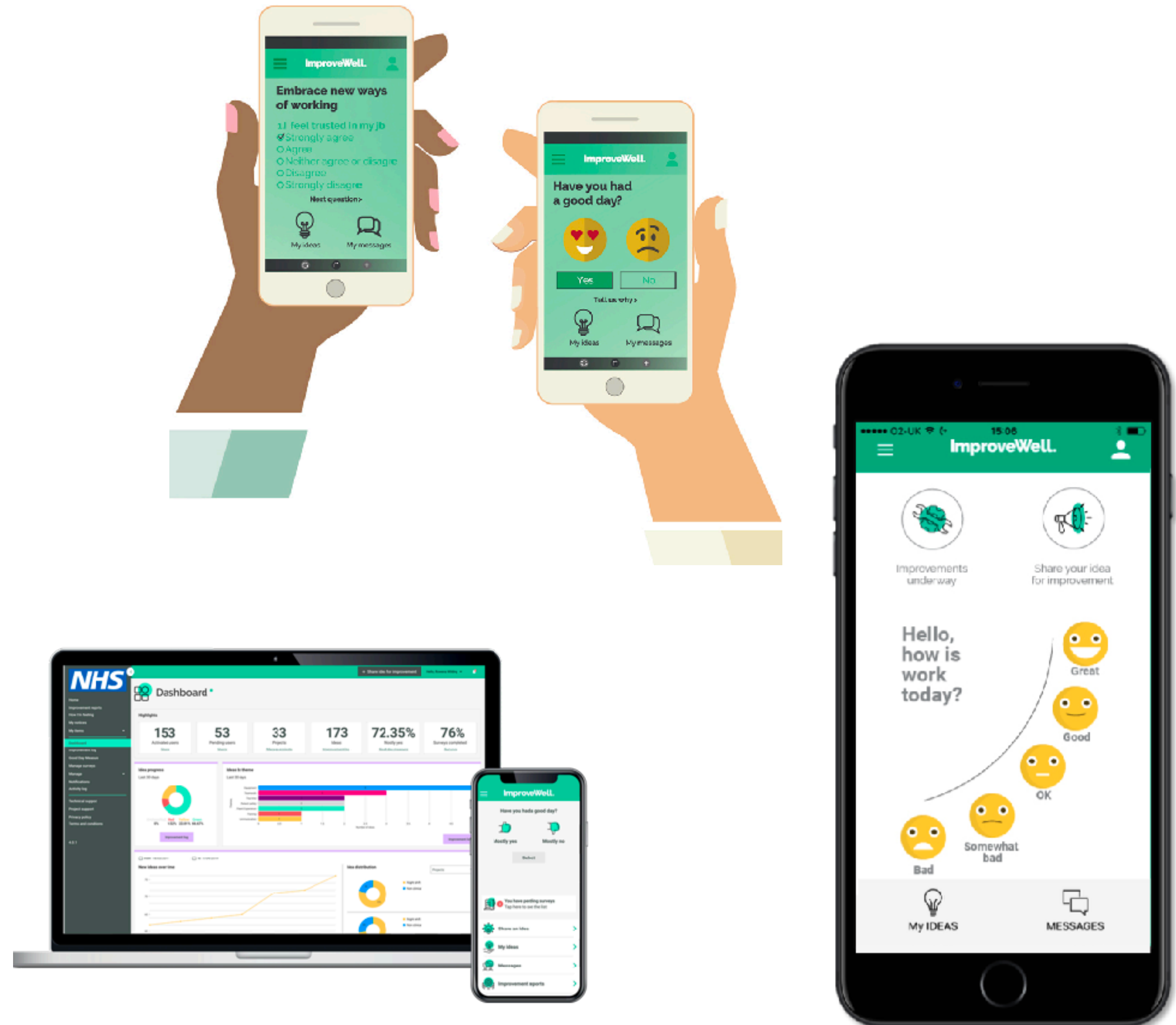
Retaining and attracting skilled workers is essential to meeting the care needs of older Australians. The high-level of attention the Aged Care sector received throughout the pandemic has highlighted some of the key pressure place on aged care workers:

- Adhering to conflicting guidelines in short time frames,
- Chronic understaffing,
- Administrative time-traps, and
- Additional labour tasks outside of their job descriptions.

A digital employee engagement solution

Capturing continuous, real-time and actionable insights from frontline healthcare workers to improve employee experience and the quality of patient care.

Open for feedback input 24/7, employees can suggest ideas for improvement, share how their workday is going, and complete tailored surveys. The data is collected in a dashboard that helps group and organisation leaders track workforce sentiment, prioritise improvements, measure change and publish improvement reports. In addition, organisations can join a community of healthcare strategists offering opportunities for collaboration and share best practices.



How can we help?

We are passionate about healthcare

At Designit, we believe high-quality healthcare services are essential for everyone. We work with healthcare companies around the world to make this a reality.

By creating smooth experiences and services for clinicians, healthcare support staff, payers, and consumers we can enable a truly humanity-centred ecosystem that focuses on keeping people well.

We bring a depth of experience to every engagement as we partner with startups, hospitals, insurance companies, device manufacturers, and others in the healthcare ecosystem to design world-class healthcare applications, devices, spaces, and processes.

We believe healthcare matters.

Design for healthcare has unique considerations

Both functional and emotional **needs are more complex** in healthcare, so we design tools and processes that are flexible, guiding, and take a burdened user mindset into account.

The **physical environment has an outsized impact** on caregiving and care-receiving, so we design spaces and devices that are humanity-centred.

Clinicians are deeply motivated by patient care, deeply time constrained, and quick to find work arounds if processes get in the way, so we design experiences that fit real workflows and support the humans involved.

Reimagining how clinicians provide care in a pandemic

To cope with COVID-19, medical facility managers, clinicians, and patients have creatively and resourcefully adapted their practices and physical spaces.

With planning and design, we can partner with clients to create new processes, practices, and systems that allow the practice of safe, effective healthcare.

As norms and rituals are in upheaval, and as inefficient and inadequate systems are visible in stark relief, now is the time to reimagine, innovate, and design tools, practices, and communities that elevate healthcare and prepare us for a future surge or crisis.

Arigatō, danke,
dhanyavād, gracias,
tack, tak, takk,
thank you, toda.

Get in touch

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About Designit

As an experience innovation company with creativity at our core, we work at the intersection of strategy, design, marketing, and technology. Through diverse lenses, humane technology, and purposeful risk, we're driven by the belief that what matters tomorrow is designed today.

We've always known that design has the fundamental ability to change the way people live, work and play. We've seen it happen, and we've made it happen.

But it's time for solutions that better connect brands, organisations, and businesses. Time to start addressing the challenges people and businesses face every day. And this calls for a new way of thinking. A new way of solving problems and measuring success. A shift from a human-centred perspective towards a humanity-centred one. Pursuing long-term progress for all over immediate value for some.

So, together with our partners, we're hell-bent on turning change into progress—shared progress.

Contributors

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