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Whitepaper

## **The Future of Aged Care** **Digitising Processes to Ensure Quality Care** **and Transparency**

# | Executive Summary

Australia's Aged Care industry is undergoing a seismic shift due to the new reforms outlined in the new Aged Care Act, strengthened aged care quality standards, a new regulatory model & self-assessment process, and the ongoing requirements of the Serious Incident Reporting Scheme (SIRS).

It has therefore become imperative that Aged Care organisations have a transparent operating model with clear processes for incident management, feedback & complaints, risk management, governance & controls, business continuity planning, information security, data privacy, and compliance with standards & regulations.

This whitepaper explores why Aged Care providers are making the digital shift to software solutions. It enables enable them to streamline & automate processes and utilise best-practice workflows, templates, and online forms to digitise their operating model and restructure their operations to meet evolving regulatory requirements & standards.

The data gathered by the software provides vital reporting outputs to not only prove compliance with regulations & standards, but to drive process efficiencies and improve patient care.

# Recent Industry Requirements

There are several standards, regulations and government directives impacting the aged care sector. Here is a run down of some of the key obligatory requirements impacting the industry.

## New Aged Care Act

The Australian Government plan to launch the new Aged Care Act on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025. The proposed changes will empower older people to exercise their rights when accessing or seeking to access government-funded aged care services. It will support them to live active, self-determined, and meaningful lives as they age, and improve the quality of care and respect they receive as individuals.

The fundamental processes firms should look to implement before 2025 to ensure they are compliant with the requirements of the new act include:

Emergency preparedness and response plans.

An active business continuity plan.

Governance and controls to ensure high-quality care.

Systems to support informed decision making for patients and their families.

Compliance processes to document self-assessments & audits.

Effective incident reporting and incident management processes to escalate & resolve incidents promptly.

Establishing clear governance structures to ensure accountability & compliance.

Transparent reporting mechanisms for financial and operational performance.

Systems to collect feedback & complaints

Formalised processes for whistleblowing & disclosures.

Adopting digital operating models to document care outcomes.

Effective cyber risk & cyber incident management to protect patient data.

Robust recruitment & retention strategies to meet workforce demands.

# The Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

The revised Aged Care Quality Standards have been designed to improve outcomes for older people and set clear expectations for providers in the delivery of quality aged care. The existing standards only set out minimum acceptable standards for accreditation and didn't necessarily motivate & empower providers to achieve high levels of care & outcomes for the elderly. During an investigation into the sector The Royal Commission identified several areas of improvement that have been factored into the new standards – including governance, diversity, dementia, food & nutrition, and clinical care.

There are 7 standards in total addressing the following areas:



Source: Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare.



### **Standard 1 – The Person**

This standard focuses on the dignity and choice of patients. Organisations must respect and uphold the individuality, dignity, and preferences of aged care recipients, ensuring personalised care.



### **Standard 2: The Organisation**

This standard provides guidance around ongoing self-assessments, implementing governance procedures, and planning - to ensure that assessments are conducted regularly and reflect the evolving needs of individuals to ensure person-focused care for everyone.



### **Standard 3: Care and Services**

Under this requirement aged care providers will need to deliver safe, high-quality personal and clinical care services that meet professional standards and the specific needs of the individual – enabling them to take risks and make decisions.



### **Standard 4: The Environment**

This standard requires aged care organisations to provide services and support for daily living that enhance the quality of life, promoting independence, health, and social engagement for those in care. It also requires good infection prevention and control (IPC) practices.



### **Standard 5: Clinical Care**

This requirement ensures that the environment where clinical care is provided is safe, clean, and accessible.



### **Standard 6: Food and Nutrition**

This standard is about working with older people to find out what they like to eat and drink and providing varied food choices in residential care.



### **Standard 7: The Residential Community**

This acknowledges that when people move into a residential service, the new community becomes a central part of their lives. It's important for people to feel safe, included and respected.

# The New Regulatory Model

Royal Commission have also proposed a new way of regulating the aged care industry due to ineffective regulation being one of the key contributing factors to the high levels of substandard care in Australia's care system. Therefore, a [New Regulatory Model](#) is being introduced to align with the new Aged Care Act. The new regulatory model aims to make regulation more focused on the type of care each provider offers.

Providers will be split into 6 different categories depending on the services they provide:

<b>Category 1</b>	Home and community services
<b>Category 2</b>	Assistive technology and home modifications
<b>Category 3</b>	Advisory and support services
<b>Category 4</b>	Personal care and care support in the home or community (including respite)
<b>Category 5</b>	Nursing and transition care
<b>Category 6</b>	Residential care (including respite)

This new way of regulating the sector will seek to prevent harm to people receiving aged care services and ensure that instances of substandard care are detected and addressed immediately and appropriately.

The new regulatory model will have changes in the following areas:

- How providers enter the sector.
- Provider obligations.
- Regulatory oversight of the sector
- How complaints and feedback are managed.
- Information available to older people.
- Providers will also be regulated against the [Commonwealth Home Support Programme \(CHSP\)](#) and the [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care \(NATSIFAC\) Program](#).



# The Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS)

The Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) was introduced to reduce abuse, neglect and sub-standard care in the aged care sector. The SIRS provides guidance about how to capture and manage incidents and when they should be escalated to the Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission. It is designed to:



Strengthen aged care systems to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect.



Enable Aged Care providers to better respond to serious incidents.



Empower providers to use incident data to drive improvements in quality and safety.



Reduce the likelihood of preventable incidents from reoccurring.



Ensure people involved in incidents have the support they need.



It requires Aged Care providers to have an Incident Management System (IMS) in place to enable staff to log incidents, hazards, and near misses, escalate them via the appropriate channels, and fully document the steps taken to resolve them. It also requires organisations to report on incident rates to understand the root-causes, prevent similar incidents reoccurring, and ensure continuous improvement. Aged care providers must also show adequate support for those impacted by serious incidents.

There are 8 types of incidents that must be escalated to the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission if it occurred while a person was receiving aged care:

- Unreasonable use of force.
- Unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual conduct.
- Psychological or emotional abuse.
- Unexpected death.
- Stealing or financial coercion by a staff member.
- Neglect.
- Inappropriate use of restrictive practices.
- Unexplained absence.

The incidents must then be prioritised into 2 categories to determine the timeframe in which it should be reported to the Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission.

## Priority 1

### Report within 24 HOURS

- A physical or psychological injury or discomfort that needs medical or psychological treatment.
- Unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual conduct.
- The unexpected death of a person using aged care.
- The unexplained absence of a person receiving care.
- If there are reasonable grounds for reporting the incident to the police, it's also a Priority 1 incident.

## Priority 2

### Report within 30 DAYS

- Priority 2 incidents are all other incidents that meet the 8 categories outlined by the Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission that aren't considered Priority 1.



# Digitising Aged Care to Deliver Value-Based, Patient Focussed Care

Like most industries, the Aged Care sector is now experiencing an increasing shift towards electronic systems and digital transformation. Aged Care software is now widely used in many care homes, nursing facilities, and in home care services. Aged care providers with an eye on the future are starting to reap the rewards of this endeavour with a significant reduction in operating costs, increase in operational efficiency, and an overall improvement in service delivery.

Many leading aged care providers are now perceiving enterprise software solutions as a beacon for growth. An increase in customer expectations is providing new opportunities for healthcare providers to take charge in providing a premium service. By digitising key aspects of practices and having the ability to take advantage of data science, there is now opportunity to significantly improve the quality of life for Aged Care customers. Combining this with being seen as a more viable option to comply with the stringent industry regulations and controls, Aged Care providers can use the data provided by software platforms to assure customers & regulators of the service it provides.



# 8 Ways Aged Care Providers are using Software to Digitise Processes

## 1 Incident Management

Aged Care organisations approach to incident management often lies within spreadsheets and paper-based forms & reports – resulting in disjointed processes with little procedural oversight and limited reporting. This decentralised process means incidents can slip through the cracks and slows down escalation and resolution. It also becomes a struggle to meet the requirements of the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS).

Aged care providers can use software to set up a best-practice incident management system (IMS). These solutions allow employees to log incidents, hazards, and near misses via online forms with all data feeding directly into the platform. Firms can customise fields to capture relevant data for various incident types and staff can easily upload photos and evidence into the system.

Once an incident is logged it is then categorised and automated workflows escalate the incident to the relevant staff. Teams can then document all the tasks and steps taken to resolve the incident, follow up on corrective actions, and close the loop on the incident. Staff can easily log incidents even while visiting patients in their homes via a mobile app ensuring swift reporting times.

Incident data is captured in a consistent format thanks to data governance rules like dropdowns, menus, and mandatory fields. This makes reporting on incident data easy. Management can view a variety of dashboards and run reports to understand the source and location of incidents, the status of unresolved incidents, and any controls and policies that have been implemented to reduce future occurrences. The system can be linked to your active directory enabling you to tag employees, patients involved, and locations.

The visibility created by using software for incident management develops a strong safety culture - empowering employees to report all incidents and ensuring organisations can continuously improve the safety and quality of their service.

## 2 Feedback & Complaints

Capturing feedback & complaints is essential to improve patient safety & quality of care. Logging complaints on an ad hoc basis via email and conversations with staff makes it difficult to capture the data consistently and report on the data to identify common sources of complains so they can be resolved.

Consequently, many aged care firms are using software to formalise their feedback & complaints process. Staff, families and even patients themselves can log into an online portal and provide feedback or log a complaint. An intuitive user interface with predefined fields makes it easy to capture all the relevant details and upload photos, documents, and evidence. Automated workflows escalate the complaint to the relevant team so it can be addressed appropriately. Teams can use the platform to fully document remediating actions and next steps until the complaint is resolved. Positive feedback can be distributed to staff to boost morale.

Management can view insightful reports & dashboards to understand the source of complaints and who is involved to look for trends. They can understand how quickly complaints are addressed to try and improve response times and implement measures to address the root-cause of complaints.

## 3 Documenting Patient Care

To maintain high quality care, Aged Care facilities need to document the care that patients are receiving and monitor KPIs. Gathering data and centralising it for documentation purposes forms a major part of the responsibility of Aged Care providers. By using software, this process is made easy and hassle free. Caregivers are no longer required to maintain heavy files, hard copy documents, and time-consuming spreadsheets, which are all susceptible to human error. Instead, data is entered via online forms and feeds straight into the system. The software can be used to log mealtimes, food intake, medication provided, type of care administered, time with the patient and any accidents or incidents. Automated workflows can remind caregivers of their upcoming tasks, and they can log completion in the system and document evidence online or via the mobile app. The right software solution for Aged Care compliance and risk management should combine all aspects of the life and journey of a resident – from pre-admission to lifestyle and clinical journeys, through to exit.

## 4 Disclosures and Whistle blowing

The aged sector has a duty to protect patients and staff, therefore it is critical that employees and patients feel that they can speak up and report areas of concern or mis treatment. Whether it is inadequate care, abuse, neglect, sexual harassment, bullying, or unfair & bias treatment – staff should have a safe and discreet way to disclose this sensitive information to ensure the matter can be escalated & addressed appropriately.

Having a formalised & discreet way to report problems is crucial to maintain quality of care and preserve organisational integrity. Establishing effective channels for reporting concerns – and ensuring protection for whistleblowers – contributes to an aged care facility that prioritises transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Software can provide a discreet portal with online forms making it easy for staff & patients to disclose problems or whistle blow. Staff simply complete an online form to report a potential area of misconduct or wrongdoing. Based on the data entered, automated workflows escalate the incident to the relevant stakeholder. All evidence is documented within the system and workflows enable teams to monitor each case until it is closed.

The software ensures the anonymity of those reporting and external portals can even be set up to enable patients and their families to report misconduct. As the information is captured, management teams can easily report on the data and start to understand the source of wider problems, enabling them to change staff, implement policies, or take disciplinary action when needed. The evidence from the solution can be used in tribunals.

## 5 Risk Management

Managing risk with the relevant controls, governance procedures, and policies is essential in the Aged Care Sector. The sector is privy to a variety of different risk exposures including,



### Operational Risk

Including staff shortages, power failures, and system down time.



### Information Security Risk

Sensitive patient data and records must be stored safely with effective IT security.



### Compliance Risk

Relating to proving compliance with key aged care regulations such as the Aged Care Act and the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS).



### Health & Safety Risks

Including slips, trips and falls, medication errors, facility maintenance, disability equipment, and food & medication availability.

Using software makes it easy to manage risk and implement effective controls and policies. Firms can use the software to build an online searchable risk register. Risks are logged using simple online forms – capturing key credentials like risk owner, category & type, and any Key Risk Indicators (KRIs).

Once risks are established, firms can monitor risk levels by rolling out regular risk assessments via online forms and automated workflows and by monitoring operational data for risk exposure. When a risk level reaches an intolerable level or exceeds the risk appetite, a notification is sent to the risk owner so they can take action. All remediating actions can be logged in the system until the risk is lowered back to an acceptable level.

Firms can also set up a control library to set controls for their most critical risks. Controls come in many forms, they might be a policy or procedure that staff must follow, it might be a regular check, or it might be a piece of safety equipment. Staff can carry out regular control checks and control testing within the platform and capture the results.

The data captured by the platform enables firms to allocate budget and resources to reducing the most critical risks and implement controls where needed. Firms can run a variety of reports and view dashboards to summarise their risk register and understand risk exposure & control effectiveness.



## 6 Compliance

Achieving compliance with the many aged care regulations to maintain a licence to operate can be challenging for Aged Care organisations. There are many regulations to consider including the Aged Care Act, Aged Care Quality Standards, SIRS, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Act, Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act, Charter of Aged Care Rights, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Standards, Privacy Act 1988, and Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), Food Safety Standards and Medication Management Guidelines. Aged Care firms will also have their own internal operating procedures, policies, and code of conduct to uphold.

Many firms in the Aged Care sector are using software to manage their regulatory requirements. There are 2 ways a system can help.

Firstly, teams can establish an 'obligations library' in the software - listing out all of the requirements for each applicable regulation and standard. They can then implement regular checks, questionnaires, and surveys, or implement step-by-step structured processes to ensure compliance and document the required evidence. Teams can implement automated workflows to manage regulatory change and understand the operational processes and policies affected.

Secondly, they can implement best practice processes for key areas like, incident management, feedback & complaints, risk management, governance & controls, policy management, health & safety, whistle blowing & disclosures, information security, and business continuity. All of which contribute to complying with key aged care regulations like the Aged Care Act, SIRS and much more.



# 7

## Audits & Inspections

Aged care homes have standards to uphold and are subject to regular internal and external audits. Using software can simplify the audits & inspections process – including automating your self-assessment to the Royal Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and your government assessor audit.

Firms can plan and schedule their audits using the software. For each audit, the criteria is mapped out in the platform, and auditors can capture the audit findings using online forms that feed data directly into the platform.

For example, your aged care self-assessment has 8 sections, and each section has up to 7 different criteria that you must provide evidence for. There are 42 different areas that organisations must assess themselves against and include examples of actions & evidence to support. When completing the self-assessment, you must also capture areas for improvements along with any planned actions, dates and rating options. Finally, organisations must also complete a plan for continuous improvement, capturing all the pending improvements identified in the self-assessment, along with the individual responsible and the deadline for completion.

Capturing and reporting on all this data manually - using a spreadsheet and saving files and photos as proof of evidence - can be a lengthy time-consuming process that provides disjointed results that are nearly impossible to report on.

The flexible workflows & registers, and online forms & templates available in a software platform make it easy to capture the relevant data from across the organisation and formalise the results. Auditors simply complete the data via online forms and upload evidence, documentation, and photos into the system. Automated workflows enable teams to implement any suggested improvements until audit actions are completed. Automated reporting outputs make it easy to submit your self-assessment to the Royal Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. Existing audit templates can easily be cloned to plan and schedule future audits and compare the findings.

This is just one example of how one audit can be facilitated using software, but the platforms can also be used for smaller internal audits, safety checks and inspections and equipment checks. The system keeps fully documented evidence of all the checks that were carried out when and where and by whom – providing adequate evidence of a safe culture and giving assurance to leadership teams.

## 8 Information Security

Aged care facilities hold vast amounts of sensitive patient information, making IT security a top priority. Firms must actively manage cyber risk, resolve cyber incidents, and comply with data privacy regulations.

Software can support aged care organisations to set up a cyber risk register and implement the necessary controls and policies to reduce cyber risk. Firms can establish key risk indicators in the platform and monitor cyber risk exposure - automated workflows notify the relevant stake holders when risk is too high. They can also carry out regular control testing and control checks in the platform to provide proof of adequate cyber security to regulators. Firms can also use software to capture, manage, and resolve cyber incidents & data breaches, manage IT assets & software licence expiry, and implement robust business continuity plans for their IT systems.







# What are the benefits of software in Aged Care?

With a new Aged Care Act launching in 2025, strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards, and a new regulatory model to contend with, there has never been a better time for Aged Care facilities to digitise and automate their processes.

Software offers best-practice out-of-the-box frameworks, templates, workflows, and forms to help those in the aged care sector to implement processes that align with regulatory requirements. Firms can set up best-practice processes for incident management, feedback & complaints, disclosures & whistleblowing, risk management, controls & governance, compliance, audits & inspections, cyber security, and data privacy - all in one online platform. If you have a process that requires staff to capture and document information regarding patients, software can likely automate the process and enable you to produce instant reports to analyse the results.

## The benefits of software automation in Aged Care include:

-  **Greater Transparency**  
By using software to document patient care, log incidents, and capture feedback, complaints, and disclosures, organisations can get greater transparency into their operations. This enables them to identify problems and make adjustments to improve quality of care.
-  **Improved Governance**  
By using software to establish workflows and step-by-step processes, firms can improve overall governance – quickly identifying areas where processes & policies are not being adhered to so they can be addressed.
-  **Increased Staff Productivity and Satisfaction**  
Introducing a fully integrated enterprise solution is more likely to boost staff productivity and satisfaction. The time taken to focus on mundane administrative tasks is cut down significantly, freeing up staff to focus their efforts on providing quality customer service.
-  **Visibility for Management**  
Another key benefit of adopting digital solutions is the transparency between key front-line staff and leadership teams, providing the board and management teams with a clear view of the bigger picture on the ground.

- ✔ **Improved Customer Experience**  
A key factor which is increasingly drawing a number of Aged Care providers to software solutions is that it can help improve customer experience, which in turn has an impact on positive customer engagement, allowing organisations to achieve and maintain a competitive edge.
- ✔ **Continuous Improvement**  
Using software enables firms to identify problems quickly and resolve them. Whether it is an unexpected accident, feedback from a patient or family member, a disclosure from a staff member, or simply a case of substandard care, the system will capture these problems so they can be addressed ensuring continuous improvement.
- ✔ **Automated reporting outputs**  
Whether you want to view the sources of accidents & incidents, summarise your risk register, or understand feedback, complaints, and disclosures, software can provide a variety of reporting outputs enabling aged care providers to understand what is happening at all levels of the organisation.
- ✔ **Regulatory Compliance**  
Implementing best practice processes for key functions like incident reporting, risk management, disclosures & whistleblowing. and feedback & complaints using software enables you to prove compliance to regulators.
- ✔ **Analyse Problems with Service Delivery**  
Software provides access to data on the front line so you can identify and address substandard care quickly and analyse trends and inefficiencies.
- ✔ **Uncover Opportunities**  
Having access to data can also support business growth, if you can provide good stats about quality of care and customer feedback it will attract more clients. Similarly, data can help to uncover process efficiencies and areas for growth.



# About Camms: A Riskonnect Company

Camms is a cloud-based SaaS risk, incident and compliance management solution that can support your organisation to align processes with the new Aged Care Act, strengthened aged care quality standards, and the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS).

The platform offers capabilities to:



Manage risk and implement effective controls.



Manage incidents online or via the mobile app and ensure proactive plans are in place to mitigate potential recurrence.



Incident portal ensures collaboration with external stakeholders (customers and relatives).



Automates the compliance management function and provides details of relevant regulatory changes.



Offers best practice functionality for feedback & complaints and whistle blowing & disclosures procedures.



Flexible workflows ensure all relevant information is captured and reported.



Facilitates organisational and clinical checks, controls, and treatment actions.



Provides automated alerts and notifications to the right people via built-in email and SMS functions.



Intuitive dashboards & reports provide in-depth insights into operational performance.



Signoffs can be implemented using automated workflows to ensure appropriate governance.



# How Camms is helping in the Aged Care Industry

Camms' integrated cloud-based solutions are supporting Aged Care providers to improve their service quality, ensure the safety of their customers, and to bring them in line with the new Aged Care Act and Aged Care Quality Standards.

With integrated solutions in risk, incident management, compliance, governance and operational performance, Camms software is helping Australian Aged Care organisations make the right decisions, manage risks, capture & investigate incidents, implement effective governance, and focus on delivering high quality care.

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