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**AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION  
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE**

## Caring for Cognitive Impairment

Newsletter No 6

WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER

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## Message from the Commission's CEO

I am very pleased to advise you that the second edition of the [National Safety and Quality Health Service \(NSQHS\) Standards](#) is now available. As with the first edition released in 2012, the second edition will guide health service organisations to minimise the risk of harm to patients and improve patient care. Health service organisations will be assessed to the second edition of the NSQHS Standards from January 2019.

The second edition of the NSQHS Standards addresses gaps identified in the first edition and actions to prevent delirium and manage cognitive impairment are included under the Comprehensive Care Standard. The importance of recognising and responding to delirium is further emphasised by the inclusion of mental state in the Recognising and Responding to Acute Deterioration Standard.

There are also many other actions in the second edition that will help to reduce the risk of harm for people with cognitive impairment. We are updating A Better Way to Care resources in 2018 so that they map to the second edition.

Part of the Caring for Cognitive Impairment campaign is to help hospitals prepare for the new cognitive impairment items. Our campaign website is an important component of the campaign so I hope you have had the opportunity to explore the updated [website](#) that has a wealth of new resources.

53 hospitals have joined the campaign since I last wrote to you and it is wonderful to see more hospitals sharing their experiences. [Monash Health](#) is a recent example.

One of the new features of the website is that nominated lead cognitive champions can list their name and email with their [hospital's information](#). This is to better enable people to connect locally.

Our most recent webinar was especially for these lead champions to answer their questions on the inclusion of cognitive impairment in NSQHS Standards and an opportunity to discuss their role.

We have also added a very special video to the website. It is an interview with internationally renowned delirium expert Professor Sharon Inouye filmed when she visited us at the Commission in October this year.

The updated website encourages everyone to be a [champion](#) and to promote their campaign message. You can download a poster from the website, write your message, take a photo and send it in to us at [cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au). We will feature your images on the website and help promote your campaign message.



**Merry Christmas from Ms Anne Cumming, Adjunct Professor Debora Picone and Dr Suellen Allen.**

Regards

**Adjunct Professor Debora Picone AM**

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## Professor Sharon Inouye

On 24 October 2017 the Commission welcomed the world's delirium expert Professor Sharon Inouye. Her visit followed from her contribution to a successful [Delirium Masterclass](#), organised by the Australasian Delirium Association and sponsored by the Commission. Over 400 delegates attended the masterclass.

We were very fortunate to be able to record an interview with Professor Inouye that is now available on the [campaign website](#). Professor Inouye outlines the importance of delirium, and discusses some common clinical mistakes. She also talks about effective cognitive screening, delirium assessment tools, delirium prevention and the role of antipsychotics in delirium.

Professor Inouye developed the first diagnostic tool for delirium, the Confusion Assessment Method (CAM). She also developed the first multicomponent intervention for delirium, the [Hospital Elder Life Program](#) (HELP) that has

demonstrated that delirium can be prevented. The HELP program has been introduced in over 200 hospitals world-wide.



**Professor Gideon Caplan interviewing Professor Sharon Inouye**

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## Webinar for lead cognitive champions

The most recent webinar from the Caring for Cognitive Impairment campaign was aimed at lead cognitive champions. The webinar answered questions on the inclusion of cognitive impairment in NSQHS Standards and offered an opportunity for participants to consider their role as lead cognitive champions.

You can watch the webinar on the [campaign website](#).

If you have any further questions not addressed in the webinar send them to us:

[cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:cognitive.impairment@safetyandquality.gov.au).

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## State initiatives – Queensland

A new feature of the newsletter highlights initiatives that are happening at a state or jurisdictional level. The first state we feature is Queensland, where there are many exciting projects initiated and implemented through the [Statewide Older Person's Health Clinical Network](#) and the [Statewide Dementia Clinical Network](#). We are fortunate to have Dr Keren Harvey, co-chair of the Dementia Clinical Network, on our Cognitive Impairment Advisory Group.

Key projects underway include:

1. A project to improve the discharge from hospital processes for older people with cognitive impairment. The project recognises that patients with dementia and unresolved delirium have longer lengths of stay and experience difficulties in transitioning from hospital to the community. A multidisciplinary design group with acute care, community, indigenous and consumer representation and three sites aim to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a carer-inclusive discharge process. The intervention has now commenced in all three sites (Cairns, Townsville and Gold Coast). [Read more](#)
2. A medication use in older persons project to investigate the frequency of use of antipsychotics, benzodiazepines and medicines with significant anticholinergic or sedative action in public hospitals, including metropolitan, regional and remote hospitals. The risk of harm of these medicines includes worsening cognition, falls and fractures, and an increased risk of mortality. [Read more](#)

The Statewide Dementia Clinical Network also has two working groups focusing on:

1. Development of a cognitive impairment pathway to guide health professionals and consumers in the journey between identification of cognitive impairment and definitive diagnosis
2. Improving training of care staff in acute care facilities in the care of the person with cognitive impairment by identifying, collating and making available existing training resources.

Another project will commence shortly. It will focus on the development of a “toolbox” of information about screening for cognitive impairment. This will draw on existing resources, and aim to make them easily accessible in one place on-line for use by clinicians in Queensland hospitals, especially those who care for people with cognitive impairment less frequently, or have less experience in this area.

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## Share your story

The Caring for Cognitive Impairment website features a number of stories from people living with cognitive impairment, carers and clinicians that provide insight into what we can do and learn to make a positive difference.

[Nerida Adams](#) from the Northern NSW Multipurpose Service shares her enthusiasm in participating in and training others through a project titled Insights into the hospital dementia experience project.

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## Supporters

In this issue we are including updated information from Dementia Training Australia (DTA) about their tailored training packages for hospitals.

Dementia Training Australia is now able to offer tailored training packages (TTPs) to hospitals that receive Commonwealth Aged Care Funding and are ready for a systemic approach to improving practice.

DTA will work with your hospital to deliver a package of dementia related courses, services and resources, tailored to meet your unique needs.

TTPs aim to bring about real changes in practice from the point of view of patients/clients, families and staff. They require a substantial commitment from organisations that are ready for change. A TTP starts with an assessment of staff training needs and the built environment. Once in place, it incorporates both training and environmental design.

DTA is funded by the Australian Government to provide dementia training and education across Australia. For more information on TTPs, visit the [DTA website](#), contact [dta@uow.edu.au](mailto:dta@uow.edu.au) or call (02) 4221 1555.

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## Events

**Australasian Delirium Association**



[World Delirium Awareness Day](#): 14 March 2018

Start thinking about how you and your colleagues can celebrate #WDAD2018.

The Australasian Delirium Association's [2018 Declared Conference](#): 6 – 8 September 2018

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

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## Resources

The updated campaign website provides access to a wide range of new resources that include educational videos outlining clinician experiences from different settings:

- [Dementia and Delirium: The general practice perspective](#)
- [Dementia and Delirium: Communications at transitions of care](#)
- [Dementia and Delirium in ED: A medical perspective](#)
- [Dementia and Delirium: Providing a safe and supportive environment](#)
- [Delirium: In intensive care.](#)

There are also videos of presenters from the Commission, launches of the Commission's Better Way to Care campaign, the Delirium Clinical Care Standard and Caring for Cognitive Impairment, as well as interviews with clinicians implementing the Confused Hospitalised Older Persons program.

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