



NCOA Reponses from Benetas 25/11/13.

Benetas welcomes the commencement of the Commission of Audit and looks forward to the Commission identifying wasteful expenditure so that the Government will be in a better position to meet the growing need of essential services, such as aged care. In particular Benetas urges the Commission to focus on putting in place a longer term funding strategy to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the aged care sector.

Benetas is well aware of instances of duplication in regard to regulations in aged care which are needlessly adding to the overall costs. In addition this burden of red tape is tying staff down in documentation work instead of fulfilling their primary role of supporting and caring for older people.

Some examples of this duplication are:

- We have a number of transitional care beds at one of our facilities and when an issue arises regarding clients' care we have to report to both the Commonwealth as an aged care provider and to the State as a provider of transitional care. For example, if a resident goes missing for a period of time we have to report initially to both the Commonwealth and State and then continually update both authorities as well as issue final reports. Also, the reporting formats are different and so we cannot just send the same report to both authorities. This duplication is time-wasting and a drain on our resources.
- We are completing upgrades on two of our buildings and in addition to obtaining all the necessary planning and building permits from local councils we also have to inform the Commonwealth of all the details of the building. Having received this information the Commonwealth can then decide that we have to undergo a full building certification process as well. A building certification process on these upgrades would result in duplication, extra resourcing, extra costs for Benetas and a waste of taxpayers' money. A much better solution is that advocated by Leading Australia Aged Care (LASA) which is to utilise the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and state accredited certifiers as the platform to abolish certification and replace with a standing declaration that a facility meets Division 38 of the Aged Care Act 1997 (the Act) and the Certification Principles 1997
- When an outbreak of gastroenteritis occurs at one of our facilities we have to notify the local council, State Government Department of Health and the Commonwealth all of whom have different documentation to complete. Then we have to continually keep the three authorities up to date with development and when the outbreak has finished we have to get clearance permission from the three authorities. Why is there not just one authority responsible for infectious diseases for our residents?

Another area Benetas has identified as being of little value and causing a loss of productivity in aged care is that of accommodation pricing under the new aged care reforms. At present aged care providers set their pricing according to the market and we support the transparency in pricing and appropriate publishing of prices across the sector. The convoluted and complex requirements in regard to accommodation pricing that have been put forward as part of these reforms will only add to service providers documentation burden and add onerous red tape.

Benetas does not believe that service providers need to seek approval from the Aged Care Pricing Commissioner and support the LASA position that the role of Pricing Commissioner should be delegated to the Minister with a simple reporting procedure that embeds transparency of pricing with no or minimal further administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the National Commission of Audit
