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innovAGEING to accelerate Aged Care Innovation

The Turnbull Government will contribute $400,000 over the next two years to innovAGEING, a partnership to drive and promote innovation across Australia’s rapidly growing aged care services industry.

Aged Care Minister Ken Wyatt AM said the funding would be matched by Leading Age Services Australia (LASA), which is coordinating the collaborative project.

“innovAGEING will establish a national network for the aged care services industry, bringing together progressive thinkers and practitioners,” Minister Wyatt said.

“Innovative approaches are fundamental to providing safe, quality, sustainable care in the long term.”

innovAGEING initiatives will include:

- A national awards program to encourage and reward innovation
- Twice-yearly national Aged Care Open Innovations Lab workshops
- Eight innovator speaker events across the country each year
- An 8-week innovation program for established businesses and start-ups to solve aged care industry problems, culminating in a business plan competition
- An online network actively linking participants with experts and business development coaches

“The national awards program will focus on outcomes, including improving consumer choice, realising wellness and re-ablement, enhancing consumer experience, improving care and productivity, and increasing accessing to services,” Minister Wyatt said.

innovAGEING aims to accelerate the innovation already benefiting aged care and the ageing experience for thousands of senior Australians.

“From Uber-style provision of home care services and a mobile phone app to streamline staff rostering, to robotic pets for people with dementia, new ideas are already helping to change lives,” said Minister Wyatt.

“While technology will never supplant the need for personal, people-centred services, we know it can complement care and take safety and efficiency to new heights.”
“Everything is on the table with innovAGEING. For example, the HenPower program successfully using chicken-raising to improve aged care residents’ wellbeing is not high-tech but it’s a great example of innovation.”

Today’s official launch of innovAGEING highlighted one of the latest innovations in residential aged care, the Pod Zero driverless vehicle.

Currently being trialled at the ACT’s Kangara Waters community and aged care centre, Pod Zero allows residents to travel to locations and events around the facility.

“Residents will be able to hail Pod Zero using a simple phone or tablet app, with the vehicle programmed to safely deliver them to their destination,” said Minister Wyatt.

“This innovation aims to increase independence and mobility, two key quality of life factors.”

innovAGEING will have a strong digital presence including a website and extensive social media linkages.

“With predictions Australia will need almost one million aged care staff by 2050, growth and innovation in this sector are fundamentally linked,” said Minister Wyatt.

“The innovAGEING initiative also complements the Turnbull Government’s recent $34 million investment in Dementia and Aged Care Services research.”

All peak aged care organisations have been invited to join innovAGEING, with participation also open to aged care providers, age services consumer groups, relevant university centres and researchers, public sector agencies and investors.

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