Aged Care Collaborative

Accelerating workforce innovation

Flagship Project 1:

**Enhancing Role Clarity,
Communication
and Career Pathways with a
Flexible Leadership Model**

Project Information and
Application Guidelines

V2.0 (22 April 2025)

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Overview

Opening date	Monday 17 March 2025
Closing date and time	Thursday 8 May 2025, 5pm ACST
Enquiries	Enquiries regarding the application can be submitted via email to agedcarecollaborative@ariia.org.au
Updates to these Guidelines	It is anticipated that these Guidelines will be updated periodically based on feedback and frequently asked questions during the application period. Updated versions will be available to download at https://www.ariia.org.au/aged-care-collaborative/flagship-projects **Please ensure you download and check the most up-to-date version of these Guidelines before submitting your application.**

The opportunity	Led by ARIIA, the Aged Care Collaborative's two Flagship Projects will bring together aged care providers that represent the diverse aged care landscape across Australia. Australian aged care providers can apply to participate as an Implementation Site (see Definitions) in one or both Flagship Projects. For the Flagship Project 1 outlined here, up to 6 aged care providers will be selected to participate. Led by ARIIA as the evaluation and project implementation partner, the participating aged care providers will undertake role mapping activities and then implement a defined evidence-based innovation project as outlined in "Flagship project topic" below.
Grant amount	Total grants of up to $120,000 (ex GST) per organisation, comprised of: • Up to $50,000 (ex GST) for Project Phases 1-3 (outlined in the Project Overview). • A further amount of up to $70,000 (ex GST) available to implement Project Phase 4 (outlined in the Project Overview).
Grants available	Up to 6 grants are available to Australian aged care providers.
Co-contribution	1:1 matched funds are required in addition to the ARIIA grant amount (includes cash and in-kind contribution). ARIIA is highly supportive of organisations that support care delivery in thin markets. Should organisations from Regional, Rural or Remote regions (Monash Modified Model (MMM) regions 3-7), small providers (250 or less total beds or packages) or providers of aged care with a focus on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people wish to participate and want to discuss the issues to participation that the 1:1 funding commitment requirement may pose, then please contact: agedcarecollaborative@ariia.org.au
Project funding period	Maximum of 1 year (anticipated to be July 2025 – June 2026)

Flagship project topic	**Flagship Project 1:** **Enhancing Role Clarity, Communication and Career Pathways with a Flexible Leadership Model**
	This Flagship Project aims to improve the flexibility of leadership and optimise the use of workforce to respond to the changing needs of aged care in residential and home care settings through the co-design and mapping of a flexible role matrix. This mapping process will inform the implementation of evidence-based improvements which can streamline responsibilities, accountabilities, and communication channels. By engaging leaders and staff in a comprehensive co-design process, the project will improve workforce efficiency, reduce occupational stress, and create clearer career pathways, enhancing staff retention, leadership development, and communication between residents/clients, families and staff.
	This Flagship Project will support the Implementation Site at participating aged care providers to adapt and undertake the co-design process and role matrix mapping within their unique context, supported closely by ARIIA. As part of the project, each implementation site will develop and implement an intervention that addresses their specific opportunities and challenges identified through this mapping, for example the introduction of a new leadership role, process improvements, or enhanced governance and communication mechanisms.
	Beyond implementing these interventions in local contexts and testing of the immediate outcomes, this project as part of the broader Flagship program will also test its feasibility and transferability across different aged care settings. It will foster collaboration within the sector, helping providers address workforce challenges that are difficult to tackle in isolation. On completion, it is intended that the project's findings will provide the sector with valuable evidence and insights that can be translated across a variety of aged care contexts, ultimately contributing to a more responsive, workforce-ready aged care system that aligns with the evolving needs of older Australians.
Eligibility Criteria	To be eligible to apply, organisations must: • Be a registered Aged Care Provider (see Definitions); • Be incorporated in Australia with an active ABN; • Be registered for GST; • Nominate a single home or region as an Implementation Site; • Agree to align with the Collaboration Principles; and • Be willing to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with ARIIA.
Application process	To be considered for this opportunity, organisations must: • Meet the Eligibility Criteria; • Submit the required Application Documents before the closing date and time; and • Be available in the weeks following the closing date for further discussions, if required.
Project implementation	Successful applicants will undertake the project as a single Implementation Site and as part of a consortium with other aged care providers, supported by ARIIA. The consortium will receive project management, implementation

	and evaluation support from ARIIA and embedded SMEs. ARIIA will strive to include representation across a broad range of aged care settings as part of the consortium.
Other information	These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Application Form and the Grant Funding Agreement Template available [here](#).

Definitions

Aged Care Collaborative	An initiative established by ARIIA to harness the collective wisdom of the aged care ecosystem to invest in and implement evidence-based solutions that address complex workforce challenges.
Aged Care Collaborative Advisory Group	An independent group of invited members who bring their professional and personal experience to provide expertise and guidance to the initiatives of the Aged Care Collaborative.
Aged Care Provider	An organisation approved by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to deliver Australian Government subsidised home, residential, or flexible care services.
Co-contribution	Funding provided by the Recipient to match grant funds 1:1 minimum (cash or in-kind).
Consortium	Coordinated by ARIIA, successful recipients will participate in a working group to realise project objectives under a shared project governance and implementation framework.
Eligibility Criteria	The qualifying conditions which must be met to apply for a grant.
Grant Funding	ARIIA funding provided through the Aged Care Collaborative Flagship Projects.
Implementation Site	The site chosen by the applicant to implement the project. This may be one of the organisation's residential aged care services or one home care region.
Organisational Readiness	An organisation's suitability and capability to implement the project. See section 'Organisational Readiness' below for further detail.
Project Information and Application Guidelines	This document which contains the relevant information for potential applicants.
Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)	Embedded Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) will be funded by ARIIA separately to the Grant Funding to provide advice and project mentoring to participants across the entire project lifespan.

Background

Aged Care Research & Industry Innovation Australia

Aged Care Research & Industry Innovation Australia (ARIIA) is an independent, charitable organisation funded by the Australian Government to respond to the emerging workforce challenges in the Australian aged care sector.

With support from the Department of Health and Aged Care, ARIIA has led positive transformation through innovative, evidence-based programs and projects in aged care. ARIIA has funded translational research projects that equip the aged care workforce and sector with the knowledge and skills to implement evidence-based practices and new technologies. Guided by principles of co-design, inclusion, connection, and innovation, the aged care workforce has been empowered to improve care through innovation.

Aged Care Collaborative – Flagship Projects

Aged care is undergoing a transformative shift, driven by increasing demand, changing consumer expectations and the many ongoing sector reforms, with a rights-based and person-centred approach at the core. This transformation requires a workforce and leadership that is flexible, agile and empowered with skills to think differently, and a sector-wide culture of collaboration and innovation.

The Aged Care Collaborative has been established by ARIIA to harness the collective wisdom of the aged care ecosystem to invest in and implement evidence-based solutions that address complex workforce challenges. In 2025, the Aged Care Collaborative was established with $3 million of Commonwealth funding, $2 million of which will fund two Flagship Projects.

Led by ARIIA, the two Flagship Projects will bring together aged care providers that represent the diverse provider landscape across Australia. Australian aged care providers can apply to participate in the Flagship Projects as Implementation Sites. Led by ARIIA as the evaluation and project implementation partner, the selected providers will implement a defined evidence-based innovation in their organisation and collaborate with one another to share processes, progress, learnings and outcomes.

The topic for this Flagship Project is outlined in the 'Flagship project topic' section of the Overview table above.

The Opportunity

Recognising that the aged care sector is facing significant change and challenges, the Flagship Projects will address complex workforce challenges that are difficult to respond to in isolation, presenting a unique opportunity to use a collaborative approach to enact meaningful change across the aged care sector. We are seeking applications from aged care providers that are willing to try something new in a collaborative and safe setting where you will openly discuss learnings, challenges and successes with other like-minded providers.

On completion of the 12-month project, it is anticipated that your Implementation Site will have:

- Mapped and redefined accountabilities, roles, and communication channels, which is intended to lead to improved clarity and efficiency, positive changes in task allocation, clarity of processes, improved staff satisfaction and reduced occupational stress.

- Improved communication between residents/clients, families and staff.

- Enhanced career opportunities for both clinical and non-clinical staff and a stronger workplace culture.

- Established relationships with a like-minded network by collaborating with other project participants from across the aged care sector, supported by industry and SMEs.
- Contributed to valuable evidence and learnings that can be shared across your organisation and the aged care sector, enabling implementation at scale in a variety of aged care contexts with an understanding of the factors that influence acceptability, adaptability and sustainability.

More information is available in the Project Overview section and Appendix A.

Collaboration Principles

Collaborating, sharing knowledge and learning together are fundamental to the Flagship Projects. Participating organisations will need to share this commitment to collaborate and be active participants in regular meetings with project participants and SMEs.

All Flagship Project participants will be expected to follow these Collaboration Principles:

- **Trust** - Foster mutual trust through open communication and respecting confidentiality.
- **Courage** - Embrace new approaches and balance risks.
- **Inclusive** - Seek and value diverse perspectives, keep an open mind.
- **Person-centred** – Align the approach with person-centred principles.
- **Collective learning** – Openly share best practices and lessons learned.
- **Measurable national impact** – Be proactive and inquisitive in measuring results and unpacking learnings beyond an individual organisation's context.
- **Purpose driven** – Contribute towards a better future for aged care.

Organisational Readiness

For collaborative leadership to work in aged care, organisations must be intentional in their approach. Training, governance structures, and cultural alignment are needed to make shared leadership work. Participating organisations need to be ready for this shift in culture and ways of working. The scope and complexity of this project makes Organisational Readiness a critical success factor. For this Flagship Project, Organisational Readiness is defined as:

- A genuine commitment to cultural transformation.
- A flexible mindset and openness to new ways of working.
- A willingness to embrace change, adapt workforce structures, and redefine roles, accountabilities, and responsibilities.
- The ability to secure support and engagement from management, staff, clients, and families.
- The ability to foster collaboration between clinical and non-clinical leaders.
- The capacity to work closely with embedded SMEs through workshops, mentoring, and other support mechanisms.
- A commitment to an authentic, dialogue-based co-design with multiple stakeholders.
- Effective internal communication channels to disseminate key information.

You will be asked to explain your Organisational Readiness in the Application Form.

Governance and Support

Participating organisations will be supported throughout each stage of their project by ARIIA, who will facilitate the project as the evaluation and project implementation partner to enable consistent, centralised and collaborative project and implementation management and evaluation.

An overarching Independent Advisory Group will provide high level advice to the Aged Care Collaborative's two Flagship Projects, and its members will provide high-level feedback, advice, and recommendations throughout the 12-month program.

In addition, the participants of each Flagship project will be supported at an operational project level by ARIIA staff and embedded SMEs, who will be funded by ARIIA separately to the Grant Funding and will provide advice and project mentoring across the entire project lifespan as needed.

Project Overview

Enhancing Role Clarity, Communication and Career Pathways with a Flexible Leadership Model

This Flagship Project aims to optimise workforce utilisation in residential and home care settings through the co-design and mapping of a flexible role matrix, streamlining responsibilities, accountabilities, processes and communication channels. Participating sites will adapt an evidence-based co-design and role matrix mapping process to their unique context, supported by ARIIA and SMEs. As part of the project, each Implementation Site will develop and implement based on the outcomes of this role matrix mapping an intervention that addresses their specific opportunities and challenges, for example the introduction of a new leadership role, process improvements, or enhanced governance and communication mechanisms.

Project Outcomes

Primary project outcomes:	Secondary project outcomes:
- Mapped and redefined accountabilities, roles, and communication channels, leading to improved clarity and efficiency and positive changes in task allocation and processes. - Improved staff satisfaction/retention and reduced occupational stress, turnover and absenteeism. - Improved communication between residents/clients, families and staff.	- Enhanced career opportunities for both clinical and non-clinical staff. - Stronger workplace culture. - An increase in staff productivity and meaningful engagement with residents/clients.

Each participating organisation will be responsible for collecting and reporting on measures to inform project outcomes. Project outcome data will be collated and analysed by the ARIIA project team in collaboration with the project SMEs and the collaborative consortia.

Aged Care Collaborative Program Outcomes

ARIIA will coordinate the evaluation of high-level Flagship and Aged Care Collaborative program outcomes to measure outcomes related to Organisational Readiness, participation, collaboration, acceptability, transferability, scalability and impact. Individual Implementation Sites will be asked to participate in and record data at baseline, interim and final project timepoints to contribute towards the data collection for these measures. ARIIA is aware that these evaluation activities need to be streamlined so as not to impact an organisation's capacity to undertake their implementation project, in addition to the provision of usual care.

Project Phases*

*This is an indicative schedule only, recognising that based on Organisational Readiness and capacity, participating organisations will be supported by ARIIA and SMEs to move through the project at different paces within the 12-month total timeframe.

Collaboration, evaluation, project management and knowledge sharing (across the 4 phases and 12-month period)

For organisations awarded Flagship 1 funding, support for implementation will be provided by ARIIIA and embedded SMEs at each stage of the project. This support will include site preparation, facilitation of Organisational Readiness, co-design and mapping activities, evaluation, as well as coaching, support and mentoring (either remotely or in person).

The project will be implemented in four key phases, each designed to ensure a structured approach to workforce optimisation in aged care settings.

To deliver Project Phases 1-3, participating organisations will receive up to $50,000 (ex GST) in ARIIA Grant Funding. 1:1 matched funds will be required in addition to the ARIIA grant amount (includes cash and in-kind contribution).

Phase 1: Project Initiation and Internal Communications (indicative July–August 2025)

The project will commence with the establishment of a dedicated project team, defining roles, responsibilities, and meeting schedules. Team members will undergo an orientation to clarify and agree on objectives and expectations. Internal communications will be initiated with key stakeholders to ensure clarity and engagement from the outset. Additionally, potential risks will be identified, and a high-level project plan will be developed to guide implementation.

Phase 2: Internal Consultation with SME Support (indicative September–October 2025)

Phase 2 will focus on gaining a deep understanding of leadership roles and boundaries within the organisation through observation, interviews and world café's, providing valuable insights into existing leadership structures and enabling the identification of strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement.

Phase 3: Mapping the Role Matrix with SME Support (indicative November–December 2025)

Building on insights from Phase 2, the organisation will collaborate with SMEs to map role boundaries within a structured role matrix. This process will help identify workforce gaps and areas for improvement, leading to the development of targeted interventions such as introducing a new leadership role or refining existing processes or communication pathways. Finally, the organisation will prepare a Phase 4 implementation plan detailing the recommended intervention and its anticipated impact on workforce efficiency and care quality.

With insights from Phase 2, the organisation will work with SMEs to:

- Map role boundaries within a structured role matrix.
- Identify workforce gaps and areas needing improvement.
- Develop an intervention to address these gaps, which may include introducing a new leadership role or refining existing processes.
- Prepare an implementation plan for ARIIA approval for Phase 4 funding, outlining the recommended intervention.

At the end of Phase 3, each participating organisation will need to determine their commitment to Phase 4 based on findings from Phases 2 and 3. Additional funding of up to $70,000 (ex GST) will be contingent on participating organisations detailing the scope of the intervention proposed in Phase 4, whether it involves a new leadership role, process improvements, or enhanced governance and communication mechanisms. ARIIA and the SME team will then review and approve implementation plans and allocate funding accordingly. 1:1 matched funds will be required in addition to the ARIIA grant amount (includes cash and in-kind contribution).

Phase 4: Trial and Evaluation of the Intervention with SME Coaching (indicative January–June 2026)

The final phase will focus on the implementation and evaluation of the proposed intervention. This may involve:

- Trialling a new leadership role, refining governance structures, or improving communication pathways.

- Monitoring and reporting on outcomes to assess effectiveness.

- Collaboration and knowledge sharing across the project network to maximise learnings.

See Appendix A for a more detailed Flagship Project 1 implementation plan.

Application Submission

Applications must be submitted via email to agedcarecollaborative@ariia.org.au by **5pm ACST Thursday 8 May 2025.** Note that any areas of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement should be listed in the Application Form with any proposed amendments for negotiation. Late applications will not be considered.

ARIIA, at its discretion, may seek additional information, or allow applicants to remedy minor errors, but will not accept responsibility for any misunderstanding arising from the failure by an applicant to clearly comply with the requirements set out in these guidelines, or arising from any ambiguity, discrepancy, inconsistency, error, or omission contained in the Application or these Guidelines. Contact ARIIA at agedcarecollaborative@ariia.org.au for any questions, clarifications, or further information.

Application Documents

Organisations applying for this grant must satisfy the requirements provided in the Eligibility Criteria section of the Application. To be considered for this opportunity, the Cover Letter, Application Form and supporting attachments must be submitted prior to the Application Close Date.

Cover Letter

Provide a Cover Letter (no more than 800 words) signed by an Authorised Representative of your organisation detailing:

- Why your organisation is interested in participating in this Flagship Project.

- Benefits to your organisation.

- How your involvement will benefit the Aged Care sector.

- How your involvement will support collaboration in the Aged Care sector.

- How you will ensure that your organisation and key personnel will genuinely commit to the Collaboration Principles.

- An endorsement of support for participation in the project by your Executive and/or Board.

Application Form

Please see the Application Form for full details. Key information includes:

- Contact details.
- Organisational context.
- People and capabilities.
- Project implementation.
- Non-Compliance and Declarations.

Eligible use of Grant Funds and Co-contribution

Grant funding is available to support organisations to prepare their project structure and plans, undertake co-design activities, implement the project, participate in ongoing knowledge sharing as part of the collaborative consortia, and collect the specified data to measure the outcomes.

Eligible Expenditure

Expenses related to the grant amount requested and matched co-contribution that directly support the project are eligible. These include, but are not limited to:

- Salaries and on-costs for personnel who perform the project or activities that support the project. See Appendix A for more information regarding anticipated roles and commitment required. Note that while salary overheads are eligible, organisational/institutional overheads are not eligible.
- Subcontractor costs are eligible for advisory purposes only. The use of subcontractors for other purposes are not eligible expenditure as a goal of this program is to enhance aged care workforce capability.
- Consumables required for the project but excluding those deemed to be for broad general use.
- Costs for publication and dissemination of outputs and outreach activity.
- Costs supporting stakeholder participation in co-design activities where this is related to the project.
- Equipment, hardware and software specifically required for Project Phase 4 (implementation stage), which will need to be justified in the Phase 4 Implementation plan.

Ineligible Expenditure

'Business as Usual' and capital expenses are ineligible. These include, but are not limited to, the following 'business as usual' activities:

- Retrospective (i.e., those costs incurred before a Grant Funding agreement is fully executed).
- Capital, infrastructure, or equipment costs that are unrelated to the project, or the objectives of the Conditions of Grant.
- Depreciation of assets.
- Fines and penalties.
- Cost of computers, tablets, mobiles, phones, or office facilities for project personnel.
- Rent or other property fees.
- Grant application and administration costs.

- Student placement costs.

- Organisational overheads or infrastructure levies.

- Any other expenditure determined by ARIIA as non-project costs.

Application Selection

Applications will be screened for compliance by ARIIA against the Eligibility Criteria and Selection Criteria as an initial due diligence process. The Aged Care Collaborative Advisory Group will shortlist and support selection of successful applications, ensuring representation across various aged care settings, organisation types, locations, and alignment to the Flagship Project Collaboration Principles. Final approval and selection of successful applicants will be undertaken by the ARIIA Board. All Advisory Group Members are required to declare conflicts of interest and sign confidentiality agreements prior to assessing full applications.

Selection Criteria

1	The organisation demonstrates a genuine commitment to the Collaboration Principles.
2	The proposed Implementation Site is appropriate.
3	The organisation demonstrates strategic alignment with the project topic.
4	The organisation has identified workforce challenges and/or opportunities that will be addressed by the project.
5	The organisation has anticipated how their workforce structure might evolve as a result of this project.
6	The project personnel have the skills, expertise, availability and continuity to deliver the project, and the organisation has considered other resources that need to be involved.
7	The organisation demonstrates an awareness of the Organisational Readiness required for the project and how it meets / will meet this.
8	The organisation demonstrates an existing project management capability with examples of previous project implementation and has processes in place to support project data collection to understand and measure the intervention's effectiveness.
9	The organisation has identified appropriate senior leaders who will sponsor and support the project, and the project has Executive/Board endorsement.
10	The organisation demonstrates an awareness of possible challenges and risks in implementing the project and has considered appropriate mitigations for these.

11	The organisation has appropriate communication and change management strategies in place to support the project implementation.
12	Any aspects of non-compliance have a clear rationale and do not affect the likelihood of project success.
13	When reviewed alongside other shortlisted applications, the selected organisations represent a diversity of aged care settings, organisation types, sizes and locations. The list below indicates factors that may inform the mix of organisations for this Flagship Project; however, the final selection will be dependent on applications received. • Representation from different States and/or Territories • Representation across metropolitan and regional, rural, remote areas • Representation across residential care and home care • Representation of small and large providers • Representation of for-profit and not for profit

Application Outcomes

Applicants may be contacted for additional discussions after submission and should ensure key project personnel are available for these follow-ups.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome by email before 30 June 2025.

Successful applicants will complete negotiations and enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with ARIIA within 2 weeks of the initial notification email. The Grant Funding Agreement defines obligations on the parties relating to the conduct and completion of the project. Inability to sign off within the 2 weeks may lead to withdrawal of the offer for funding.

Further Information and Feedback

Enquiries	Any queries regarding the application can be submitted via email to agedcarecollaborative@ariia.org.au
Feedback	Any feedback, or comments on the application process are welcome and can be submitted via email to: agedcarecollaborative@ariia.org.au.

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