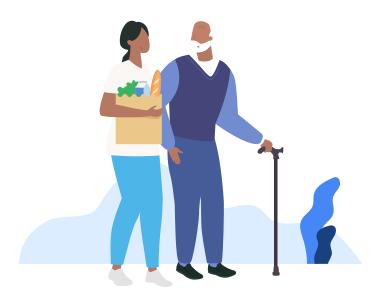# Assisting Remote-Based Aged Care Services with Digital Solutions

\ Introduction

Aiming to improve the aged care sector and bring it into the 21st century, the Australian government launched the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. After years of research, the Royal Commission published its 'Final Report' in March 2021.

According to its findings, the country's aged care industry is 'well behind other sectors in the use and application of technology, and has no clear information and communications technology strategy. This mix of factors has resulted in an aged care sector that is behind the research, innovation and technological curves.'[1]

In response, the government plans to reform the sector from top to bottom, especially remote care services. With hundreds of thousands of Australians receiving in-home care as of 2022, it makes up a large portion of the industry.[2] Remote care providers, in turn, should expect a significant digital transformation in the coming years.

This eBook will discuss how aged care is changing and the tools providers can use to bridge the technology gap in remote care service.

[1] "https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/publications/final-report"
[2] "https://www.brother.com.au/en/products/all-mobile-printers/mobile-printers/pj-883-bundle-pack"

\ Changes to the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS)

Off the heels of the Royal Commission's Final Report (which outlined 148 recommended changes to the industry), the government quickly began taking legislative action. In October 2022, the Australian Parliament passed the Aged Care Amendment — a significant reform that implements at least two of the Commission's recommendations.[3]

One important change that affects remote care providers is an extension of the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS). In short, SIRS aims to reduce abuse and neglect in aged care and help providers deliver safe, top-quality support. Previously, SIRS didn't apply to in-home services, but now remote providers must comply with a stricter incident reporting and prevention mandate.

With the number of Australians receiving in-home care tripling since 2010, it's important that providers do all they can to streamline and improve workflows at the point of care.[4] Brother offers healthcare technologies and solutions that can help remote providers meet their new regulatory requirements and digitise processes for a more efficient and flexible in-home ecosystem.

[3] https://www.health.gov.au/news/newsletters/your-aged-care-update-issue-25-2022#extending-the-serious-incident-response-scheme-to-home-care-and-flexible-care-providers
[4] https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/aged-care

\ Portable printing and incident prevention

Remote care services are now subject to the SIRS, which requires that providers maintain an effective incident management system. But what does that really mean?

According to SIRS, an effective system is one that not only helps you identify, manage and resolve in-home incidents, but also prevent them from happening in the first place.[5] Aged care providers can support their preventative efforts by reducing risk wherever possible — most notably, at the point of care.

Part of this process involves equipping remote care teams and their patients with flexible, reliable information technologies, such as a portable A4 document printer. Brother's PJ-883, for instance, is compact, lightweight and doesn't require ink or toner, making it easy for care workers to transport in the field.[6]

For example, healthcare professionals on the move need the ability to produce documentation on location so patients can be left with details of their care plan and a record of medication for treatment. A4 mobile print technology reduces the risk of errors which helps keep patients safe. In addition, mobile health workers can print instructions in the home so that patients know how to safely operate equipment, whether it be a shower tool, ramp or a wheelchair.

[5] "https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/serious-incident-response-scheme-sirs"
[6] "https://www.brother.com.au/en/products/all-mobile-printers/mobile-printers/pj-883-bundle-pack"

\ Portable scanning and incident reporting

Unfortunately, despite taking all of the necessary precautions to minimise risks, sometimes incidents occur at the point of care. It is essential that they are handled appropriately and in a timely manner. SIRS specifically mandates that all remote care providers notify the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission in a timely manner. Reportable incidents[7] include:

- **Unreasonable use of force**
- **Inappropriate sexual conduct**
- **Psychological or emotional abuse**
- **Stealing or financial coercion**
- **Neglect**
- **Inappropriate use of restrictive practices**
- **Unexplained absence from care**

Portable scanners help medical staff rapidly digitise information at the point of care and instantly upload it to their cloud storage system, such as an Electronic Medical Record (EMR). From there, they can upload it to the My Aged Care portal, as required by law.

Brother's DS-940DW, for example, is a lightweight, scanner with double-sided scanning functionality that can connect to Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, which transforms physical documents into searchable data.[8] This ensures the report can be easily retrieved and reviewed for future reference, or even edited if need be. With access to a reliable digitisation tool on site, allied health professionals can file a report and meet their compliance requirements with speed and confidence.

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[7] https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/serious-incident-response-scheme#what-are-reportable-incidents
[8] https://www.brother.com.au/en/products/all-scanners/scanners/ds-940dw

\ The importance of collaboration in remote care

Healthcare providers know that collaboration and information sharing are important. The aged care industry is no different - especially when it comes to remote care services.

Team members need to stay on the same page to ensure that patients receive an appropriate standard of care according to their legislative requirements. For instance, in-home physicians may leave notes for an incoming nurse related to a patient's care plan. In turn, that nurse may leave instructions for a physical therapist, who needs to be updated on the latest changes to the plan. Of course, patients themselves also need updated guidance, medication information and more.

Brother's Multi-Function Centres (MFCs) fill a critical void in this process. Allied health professionals can use devices, such as the MFC-L8690CDW, to digitise medical data in the office and make it accessible from a cloud-based EMR in the field[9].

Using OCR technology, physical information can be transformed into searchable data, making it easier and faster to retrieve critical documents at the point of care.

When care teams are on site, Brother's portable printers enable them to easily connect to the internet, access their storage system and instantly print the necessary documents. This empowers every stakeholder - doctors, nurses, therapists, etc., - to share their notes with colleagues and patients alike.

9 "https://www.brother.com.au/en/products/all-printers/printers/mfc-l8690cdw-aus"

\ Brother solutions for remote aged care

By now it's obvious that the aged care industry is due a significant transformation. As a matter of fact, it's already well underway. Recent legislative changes are challenging remote care providers to improve their processes, streamline care and take advantage of digital technology.

Brother is dedicated to supporting the aged care sector as it navigates a rapidly changing landscape. From flexible solutions such as our portable print and scan technologies to rapid data collection tools like our Multi-Function Centres, we're *at your side* every step of the way.

Contact our team for more information about how Brother can help you improve your operations within the aged care sector.

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at your side