



# Changes to aged care in Australia

# Changes to aged care

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The Australian Government is making positive changes to aged care. These changes – known as the aged care reforms – will improve aged care in Australia now and into the future.

Many of these changes are in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Our vision is to deliver the highest quality person-centred care for older people, where and when they need it.

## Some of these changes include:

- introducing the **24/7 registered nurse responsibility**, which means a nurse must be on-site and on duty in all aged care homes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- introducing a sector average of **200 mandatory care minutes** per resident per day to make sure people living in aged care homes have their clinical and personal care needs met each day – this will increase from 1 October 2024 to 215 minutes
- launching the **Integrated Assessment Tool** on 1 July 2024 as the first stage of the new Single Assessment System to simplify and improve access to aged care
- publishing information about the **finances and operations** of aged care homes and other aged care providers on My Aged Care's 'find a provider' tool
- establishing a **Food, Nutrition and Dining Hotline**, where older people in aged care homes, their families and carers can ask questions, get advice and make complaints about their food
- introducing **Star Ratings** to help older people, their families and carers to more easily compare aged care homes and make informed choices
- funding a **15% wage rise for more than 250,000 aged care workers**, recognising the value of aged care workers and the important work they do
- introducing **face-to-face support** in Services Australia service centres to help older people and their families and carers access the aged care system.

# A message from the Hon Anika Wells MP

Minister for Aged Care  
Minister for Sport



## **Better aged care, now and into the future.**

My mission is to build a high-quality, safe and person-centred aged care system that older people and their families trust.

We've made some huge changes across the sector and we're starting to see the results. Right now, there is a registered nurse on-site in aged care homes almost 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. One year on from implementing our 24/7 nursing requirement, there is a registered nurse on site and on duty 99% of the time.

Aged care residents are also receiving an additional 3.9 million minutes of direct care every single day because of new mandatory minimum care requirements. There has been a reduction in the number of falls and pressure injuries. These new requirements and their results, help provide peace of mind for older people, and their families and carers.

The Star Ratings system, which helps you choose an aged care home suited to your needs, also shows us that things are changing. Since it was implemented in December 2022, there has been a 27% increase in homes receiving 4 and 5 star ratings. 66% of all homes are now rated at a 'good' or 'excellent' level.

Aged care is growing stronger and becoming more transparent every day. You can now see how much residential and home care providers spend on care, food, wages and more on My Aged Care. And since we capped management fees, 85,000 home care package recipients who changed service providers or exited the program saved nearly \$30 million on exit fees.

There are still plenty more changes to come. We're working with providers and older people to develop the new Support at Home programs and the new Aged Care Act, a simple, rights-based legal framework that focuses on the needs of older people.

We are working to build a world-class aged care system that will continue to innovate and improve beyond the bounds of the Royal Commission's recommendations.

As always, we encourage you to have your say. Together we can continue to make positive, lasting changes to aged care and build a world class aged care system that delivers safety, dignity and respect for older people.

**July 2024**

# Getting started with aged care

**We're working to make the aged care system easier to access and navigate.**

## My Aged Care

If you need help around the house or are thinking about aged care homes, contacting My Aged Care is the first step. My Aged Care provides:

- information on the different types of aged care services available
- an assessment of needs to identify eligibility and the right type of care
- referrals and support to find service providers that can meet your needs
- information on what you might need to pay towards the cost of your care.

Contact My Aged Care:

- **1800 200 422**
- **MyAgedCare.gov.au**
- **Face-to-face** by speaking with an Aged Care Specialist Officer (to book an appointment call **1800 227 475** or visit any Services Australia Service Centre).

## Aged Care Specialist Officers

An Aged Care Specialist Officer (ACSO) can speak to you face-to-face and help you in more detail with your aged care matters. They can help you by:

- providing in-depth information on the different types of aged care services
- checking if you're eligible for government-funded services and making a referral for an aged care assessment
- helping you appoint a representative for My Aged Care
- providing financial information about aged care services
- connecting you to local support services.

You can book a free face-to-face appointment with an ACSO:

- through video chat if you have a myGov account
- in person at some Services Australia service centres.

**[ServicesAustralia.gov.au/aged-care-specialist-officer-my-aged-care-face-to-face-services](https://ServicesAustralia.gov.au/aged-care-specialist-officer-my-aged-care-face-to-face-services)**

*To speak to someone face-to-face, book an appointment with an Aged Care Specialist Officer. They can help you understand your options for aged care.*

## **Financial support and advice**

When planning your finances for aged care, there are many aspects to consider—for example, pensions, superannuation, and retirement planning. So, it's beneficial to seek independent financial advice before deciding how to pay for your aged care.

Knowing where to start can be confusing, but there is help available. There are organisations, services, and tools that can offer guidance and support, including the Aged Care Specialist Officers at Services Australia.

**[MyAgedCare.gov.au/financial-support-and-advice](https://myagedcare.gov.au/financial-support-and-advice)**

## **Help from a care finder**

Care finders can help older people who need intensive help to access aged care services and other supports in the community. It is a free service for vulnerable people who have no one else who can support them. Visit the My Aged Care website to see a list of Care Finders in your area.

**[MyAgedCare.gov.au/help-care-finder](https://myagedcare.gov.au/help-care-finder)**

## **An easier assessment system**

We are establishing a new Single Assessment System to simplify and improve access to aged care services. It will be a flexible system which is able to adapt to your aged care needs as they change. The first stage of implementing the Single Assessment System was the introduction of the Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) on 1 July 2024.

**[health.gov.au/single-assessment-system](https://health.gov.au/single-assessment-system)**



# Choosing an aged care provider

**We're improving choice and transparency and making it easier to find care that meets your needs.**

## **Publishing finance and operations information of providers on My Aged Care**

Information related to residential and home care providers' finances and operations is now available to view on the My Aged Care website via the 'Find a Provider' tool.

Publishing this information provides greater transparency of provider operations and spending on things like wages, food and other care-related expenses.

You can use this information to make informed decisions and choose the aged care provider that best suits your needs.

**[MyAgedCare.gov.au/find-a-provider](https://myagedcare.gov.au/find-a-provider)**

## **Specialised aged care for people from diverse backgrounds**

We have made it easier for older people with diverse needs, backgrounds and lived experiences to access reliable information about their care providers on the My Aged Care website.

Some providers tailor their services and staff to meet the needs of specific groups. Use the 'Find a provider' tool on the My Aged Care website to find out about a provider's specialisations.

**[MyAgedCare.gov.au/find-a-provider](https://myagedcare.gov.au/find-a-provider)**

# Different languages, same aged care

**If you, or someone you care for, has difficulty speaking or understanding English, you can use an interpreting service to communicate in your preferred language.**

## **Translating and interpreting services**

If you are receiving care, you can get 24/7 phone interpreting through TIS National for the cost of a local call. Phone TIS National on **131 450** and tell the operator the language you speak. TIS National is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. You can also ask your aged care provider to contact TIS National for you using their client code.

**[TisNational.gov.au](http://TisNational.gov.au)**

## **Help from your aged care provider**

Aged care providers can translate key information into languages other than English to help them communicate with you in your preferred language.

You can ask your aged care provider to use the Department of Health and Aged Care's free translation service to produce translated versions of print and digital materials in different languages, as well as 'Easy Read' or 'Easy English' translation.

**[DiversityAgedCare.health.gov.au](http://DiversityAgedCare.health.gov.au)**

## **Deaf Connect**

If you are Deaf, Deafblind, or hard of hearing, the National Sign Language Program (NSLP) provides free sign language interpreting and captioning services through Deaf Connect for eligible older people. The NSLP can help you engage with aged care services and take part in professional and social activities. You can also use Deaf Connect through the NSLP for health and medical appointments that have a Medicare rebate.

To make a booking call 1300 773 803, email [interpreting@deafconnect.org.au](mailto:interpreting@deafconnect.org.au) or go to:

**[DeafConnect.org.au](http://DeafConnect.org.au)**

# We're building a new Aged Care Act

## Australia's aged care laws are changing to put the rights and needs of older people first.

A new Aged Care Act is being introduced. It will change how aged care services are delivered to older people in their homes, community settings and aged care homes, and ensure that older people get the care and dignity they deserve.

We have consulted on the Act in stages and invited people to provide feedback. Anyone interested in Australia's aged care system has been able to contribute, including older people, their families and carers, aged care providers and workers, researchers and experts. The new Act is expected to start on 1 July 2025.

### Fundamental changes ahead for aged care

The new Act will impact everyone connected to the aged care system. It will deliver significant changes and safeguards including:

- a rights-based approach to high-quality, safe, and compassionate care and services
- a single, culturally safe and equitable entry point into aged care
- enabling older people to choose someone to help them make decisions
- a new program to support older people in their homes
- strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards
- new worker screening to ensure carers are suitable to work in aged care
- a new regulatory framework
- stronger powers for the regulator, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
- allocating permanent residential care places to older people directly.

The new Act will include a Statement of Rights outlining what you should expect when accessing Government-funded aged care services. This will replace the current Charter of Aged Care Rights.

The new Act will include a Statement of Principles. This will guide how workers and organisations behave and make decisions.

[health.gov.au/aged-care-act](https://health.gov.au/aged-care-act)



## **What's included in the new Act?**

### **A new approach to regulating aged care**

We are introducing a new aged care regulatory model to support changes from the new Aged Care Act.

The new regulatory model focuses on your rights as an older person using aged care services. It outlines how aged care providers must operate under the new Act.

The new model will promote care that is:

- person-centred and based on rights
- meeting your needs
- safe and high quality
- monitored by the regulator in a way that is appropriate to the risks involved
- transparent, responsive to feedback and addresses concerns effectively and respectfully
- innovative and always improving to meet your needs and expectations.

[health.gov.au/regulating-aged-care](https://health.gov.au/regulating-aged-care)

### **Stronger standards for good, quality aged care**

The Aged Care Quality Standards define what quality care looks like.

We've strengthened the Quality Standards in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety findings. We've worked with the aged care sector, older people, their families and carers, advocates and experts on this.

Under the new Aged Care Act, the strengthened standards will better support the quality of care you should expect to receive. This includes:

- placing older people at the centre of aged care
- supporting people living with dementia
- being more inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds
- stronger requirements for clinical care, and food and nutrition
- more protections for you.

[health.gov.au/our-work/strengthening-aged-care-quality-standards](https://health.gov.au/our-work/strengthening-aged-care-quality-standards)

### **Measuring critical aspects of residential aged care**

The National Aged Care Mandatory Quality Indicator Program measures critical areas of care that can affect aged care residents' health and wellbeing.

Residential aged care providers must report on these 11 indicators every 3 months:

- pressure injuries
- physical restraint
- unplanned weight loss
- falls and major injury
- medication management
- activities of daily living
- incontinence care
- hospitalisation
- workforce
- consumer experience
- quality of life.

Three new staffing quality indicators will be introduced by July 2025. The staffing quality indicators will focus on:

- enrolled nurses
- allied health
- lifestyle services.

These indicators can help you make decisions about your care with information on the quality of aged care homes. Currently, pressure injuries, physical restraint, unplanned weight loss, falls and major injury and medication management also contribute to a home's Quality Measures Star Rating.

The new Act will outline more clearly how providers must measure and report on these indicators.

**[health.gov.au/qi-program](https://health.gov.au/qi-program)**

## **Assigning residential aged care places directly to older people**

Under the new Aged Care Act, the residential aged care system will change to give older people more control to select an aged care home of their choice.

The changes mean that:

- people will have more ability to choose the aged care home that best meets their needs, in a location of their choice (where there are vacancies)
- if people are unhappy at their current aged care home, they have more flexibility to move as their place is allocated to them, not the aged care home
- aged care homes will start operating in a more competitive market and will need to respond to community expectations to attract people.

**‘The problems that [older people] have and the issues they want to raise should be heard by someone and, most importantly, fixed very quickly.’**  
**- Emeritus Professor Valerie Braithwaite, aged care expert and member of the Expert Advisory Panel for the new regulatory model**

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# Improving residential aged care

**Aged care homes should be comfortable and safe, and allow people to live a meaningful life.**

## **Compare the quality of care, safety and services of aged care homes with Star Ratings**

Star Ratings make it easier to compare the quality of care, safety and services of aged care homes. All aged care homes receive an Overall Star Rating and a rating against 4 subcategories:

- **Residents' Experience**
- **Compliance**
- **Staffing**
- **Quality Measures.**

Star Ratings use a 5 star (excellent) to 1 star (significant improvement needed) scale.

Use the 'Find a provider' tool on the My Aged Care website to find out more about a specific aged care provider, and view its Star Rating:

**[MyAgedCare.gov.au/find-a-provider](https://myagedcare.gov.au/find-a-provider)**

## **Residents' Experience Survey**

The Residents' Experience Survey offers residents an opportunity to share their views on the care they receive at their aged care home.

Residents' Experience Survey feedback contributes to each aged care home's Residents' Experience Star Ratings. The de-identified responses are also shared with providers to help them understand what they are doing well and where improvements can be made.

*In 2023, around 85%<sup>[10]</sup> of residents said they would recommend their home to someone they know, with many residents saying they feel safe and respected and are treated with kindness by the staff in their home.*

## **More nurses delivering more care**

Every aged care home must have a registered nurse onsite and on duty 24 hours a day, every day of the week unless they have an exemption. This helps make sure people living in aged care homes have access to the care they need, when they need it.

Rural and remote care homes can seek an exemption, but they must have alternative arrangements in place.

Since October 2023, aged care homes have to deliver a certain amount of direct care to residents every day. This mandatory care time must be from registered nurses, enrolled nurses and personal care workers or assistants in nursing.

Each aged care home has its own care minutes target based on the needs of the residents that is updated every 3 months, with a sector average of 200 care minutes for each resident each day.

Care minutes contribute to each aged care home's Staffing Star Rating.

In October 2024, the amount of care minutes aged care homes must deliver will increase to a sector average of 215 minutes for each resident each day.

**[health.gov.au/mandatory-care](https://health.gov.au/mandatory-care)**

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**'24/7 nursing is important to the future of residential care. It gives everyone peace of mind, knowing there is an RN on duty all of the time.'**

**- Jo Boylan, CEO Clayton Church Homes**

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## **Food and Nutrition**

Delicious and nutritious meals and a positive dining experience are important parts of living a healthy and happy life. We are making changes to improve the quality of life for older people living in aged care homes through initiatives to improve food and nutrition.

We have partnered with the Maggie Beer Foundation to deliver the free 'Improving Food in Aged Care through Education and Training' program until early 2026. The program aims to support aged care chefs and cooks to source, prepare and serve nutritious and delicious food.

**[health.gov.au/aged-care-food-nutrition](https://health.gov.au/aged-care-food-nutrition)**

If you have questions or concerns about the food, nutrition or dining experience in an aged care home, you can phone the Food, Nutrition and Dining Hotline: **1800 844 044** (9am to 5pm AEDT Monday to Friday).

**[AgedCareQuality.gov.au/older-australians/health-wellbeing/food-and-nutrition](https://AgedCareQuality.gov.au/older-australians/health-wellbeing/food-and-nutrition)**

## **On-site pharmacist**

Pharmacists can now be employed by community pharmacies and aged care providers to work in aged care homes in a clinical role. Pharmacists will review medications regularly and work closely with doctors and aged care staff. By having pharmacists on site, residents and their families will have easier access to pharmacist advice, increasing confidence in medication management.

**[health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-on-site-pharmacist](https://health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-on-site-pharmacist)**



# Improving in-home aged care

**Changes to in-home aged care will ensure older people can live independently at home for longer and have access to the right level of support.**

In-home aged care supports about 1 million older people in Australia. These services range from transport to clinical care, such as nursing and allied health.

We have commissioned a range of work to improve in-home aged care in Australia, including a pricing study conducted by the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority to determine fair and efficient prices for in-home aged care.

## **New Support at Home program**

Under the new Support at Home program, there will be improved access to services, equipment and home modifications to help older people to remain healthy, active and socially connected to their community.

From 1 July 2025, the Support at Home program will replace the existing Home Care Packages Program and the Short-Term Restorative Care Programme. The Commonwealth Home Support Programme will transition into Support at Home no earlier than 1 July 2027. We are delivering the new program in 2 stages to minimise disruption and ensure continuity of care for older people.

[health.gov.au/in-home-aged-care-reform](https://health.gov.au/in-home-aged-care-reform)

## **Home Care Packages pricing caps**

Until the new Support at Home program begins on 1 July 2025, the Home Care Packages Program will continue to operate as normal and provide support to older people at home.

In 2023 we took significant steps to make sure older people will no longer be charged excessive administrative and management costs as part of their Home Care Package.

From 1 January 2023, care management and package management charges were capped at 20% and 15% of the respective package levels. We also banned exit fees, making it easier to change providers, and stopped providers from charging separate brokerage and subcontracting fees.

# Reimagining where we live

**We're encouraging innovation to improve the design of new and existing aged care homes.**

## **National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines**

We have been working with older people, their families and carers, the aged care sector and design experts to improve the design of aged care accommodation. In July 2024, National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines were introduced to improve quality of life for older people living in residential aged care.

This resource puts the needs of older people first and encourages aged care homes to make design changes that create welcoming, safe and dementia-friendly spaces. The Principles and Guidelines will help create environments that give older people a sense of home, better access to the outdoors and connection to their community. They will also support a sense of identity, dignity and belonging and help residents to stay independent as they age.

Older people, especially those living with cognitive impairment or dementia, will benefit from well-designed aged care accommodation that is guided by four principles:

- enable the person
- cultivate a home
- access to outdoors
- connect with community.

**[health.gov.au/designing-residential-aged-care](https://health.gov.au/designing-residential-aged-care)**

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**The guidelines support the development of safe and comfortable environments that promote independence, function and enjoyment.**

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# Dementia Support

**People living with dementia and their carers will have access to high-quality aged care services, so they can stay in their homes for longer.**

## **National Dementia Support Program**

The National Dementia Support Program aims to help people living with dementia or experiencing cognitive decline, and their carers and support networks, to understand more about dementia. It also connects people with appropriate dementia services and support so they can self-manage and live well with dementia for as long as possible. The program offers support through counselling, education, webinars, special assistance for vulnerable communities, and an online library service.

**[health.gov.au/ndsp](https://health.gov.au/ndsp)**

*The National Dementia Helpline is a free, confidential phone and email information and support service. The helpline can be contacted on 1800 100 500 (24/7, 365 days a year) or by email at [helpline@dementia.org.au](mailto:helpline@dementia.org.au).*

## **Dementia Support services**

The Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service (DBMAS) aims to improve the quality of life for people living with dementia and their carers. DBMAS provides support and advice when mild to moderate behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia impact a person's care or quality of life. Trained consultants help both family carers and aged care providers to understand the causes and/or triggers of behaviours and assist with developing strategies that optimise function, reduce pain, support other unmet needs and improve engagement. DBMAS is available to support people who are living at home or in residential aged care.

**[dementia.com.au](https://dementia.com.au)**

**[health.gov.au/dbmas](https://health.gov.au/dbmas)**

## **Specialist Dementia Care**

The Specialist Dementia Care Program (SDCP) supports people with very severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD) whose support needs cannot be met in a residential aged care home. Support is provided in a small cottage-like, dementia-friendly environment in which people living with dementia receive personalised, goal-focused care from staff with dementia training and support from specialist clinical services.

**[health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/specialist-dementia-care-program-sdcp](https://health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/specialist-dementia-care-program-sdcp)**

## **Respite care support services**

Respite care programs are available to support people living with dementia and their carers. Through access to dementia-specific respite, including carer education and wellbeing, support can help improve the quality and experience of respite care and care planning, and reduce carer burnout. A range of organisations are funded to deliver dementia-specific respite programs across state and territories.

**[MyAgedCare.gov.au/short-term-care/respice-care](https://MyAgedCare.gov.au/short-term-care/respice-care)**  
**[health.gov.au/dementia-respice-care](https://health.gov.au/dementia-respice-care)**

## **National Dementia Action Plan**

The National Dementia Action Plan is a joint 10-year initiative between the Australian Government and state and territory governments. It will include actions to improve awareness, reduce the population's risk of dementia, and drive better coordinated services for people living with dementia, their carers and families throughout Australia.

We are working to finalise the Plan with states and territories, following extensive consideration of feedback from a public consultation and engagement with stakeholders.

**[health.gov.au/our-work/national-dementia-action-plan](https://health.gov.au/our-work/national-dementia-action-plan)**

- *More than 400,000 Australians are living with dementia*
- *Dementia is the leading cause of disease burden in Australians over 65*
- *Nearly 2/3 of Australians living with dementia are women*
- *Over half the people in aged care homes are living with dementia*

# Improving palliative care services

**We're improving palliative care services to help people with a life-limiting illness live as comfortably as possible.**

Palliative care is support for people living with a life-limiting illness. The aim of palliative care is to give people a good quality of life. This includes making sure you and your family get the care and support you need.

Palliative care is based on individual needs and may involve:

- relief from pain and other physical symptoms
- planning for future medical treatment decisions and goals for your care
- emotional, spiritual and psychological support
- help for families to come together to talk about sensitive issues
- support for people to meet cultural obligations
- counselling and grief support
- referrals to respite care services.

We are improving palliative care services by:

- growing a skilled and high-quality workforce to care for older people by expanding palliative care training and education activities
- supporting the aged care system to embed palliative care as core business
- improving outcomes for older people in aged care homes by helping staff assess symptoms and plan care that is appropriate and person-centred
- improving access to quality palliative care at home.

**[health.gov.au/palliative-care](https://health.gov.au/palliative-care)**

# Support for older First Nations peoples

**We're making sure First Nations peoples aged 50 years or over can access quality, culturally appropriate aged care services.**

## **Meeting the needs of First Nations communities**

There are initiatives to help older First Nations peoples remain on Country, such as additional funding for remote residential providers delivering services under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program. This program will continue to ensure older First Nations peoples have access to high-quality, culturally safe care.

We are also building the capacity of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to support and develop the First Nations aged care sector and build a local workforce to deliver aged care for First Nations communities.

**[health.gov.au/first-nations-aged-care](https://health.gov.au/first-nations-aged-care)**

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**'[Home care] gives me the independence to live here in my home and live quite comfortably. The workers coming in from home care have given me a better quality of life.'**

**- Aunty Shirley arranged for an Aboriginal aged care service to provide her with help at home through My Aged Care.**

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## **Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner**

Andrea Kelly has been named as the Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner. Andrea is a much-respected First Nations leader and brings 32 years' experience engaging with First Nations communities and developing public policy.



The Interim Commissioner has been engaging with First Nations communities and stakeholders on the design and functions of a permanent Commissioner role, including where it is located.

Andrea has also been advocating for First Nations peoples and providers to ensure ongoing changes to aged care meet the needs of older First Nations peoples.

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**‘I am delighted to accept the role of Interim Commissioner and for the opportunity to advocate for and work directly with First Nations people regarding their aged care needs.’ - Andrea Kelly, Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner**

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## **Elder Care Support**

The Elder Care Support program will recruit and train a skilled workforce. The workforce will help older First Nations peoples, their families and carers access aged care services across urban, regional and remote Australia to meet their physical and cultural needs.

The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation is rolling out the program in phases over 3 years.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care assessment workforce**

We are establishing First Nations assessment organisations to provide a culturally safe pathway for older First Nations people to access aged care.

With a strong understanding of the aged care needs of older First Nations people, these organisations will deliver a culturally safe and trauma-informed assessment process.

Older First Nations people will gain better connections with appropriate care and services and benefit from an increased focus on culturally safe experience and improved assessment outcomes.

## **Speak to My Aged Care in language**

First Nations people who speak one of the below languages can connect to My Aged

Care through Interpreter Connect. Call My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 and ask for an interpreter from the available languages:

- Alyawarre
- Anmatyerre
- Arrernte (Central / Eastern)
- Arrernte (Western)
- Djambarrpuyngu
- Gumatj
- Murrinh Patha
- Ngaanyatjarra
- Ngaatjatjarra
- Pintupi-Luritja
- Pitjantjatjara
- Kriol (Top End)
- Torres Strait Creole (also known as as Yumplatok)
- Warlpiri
- Yankunytjatjara
- Yolngu Matha

**[MyAgedCare.gov.au/accessible-all](https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/accessible-all)**

# Support for regional, rural and remote communities

**We're improving access to aged care for the more than 1 in 3 older people living in regional, rural and remote communities.**

## **More residential aged care places**

Multi-Purpose Services (MPS) provide integrated health and aged care services in areas that cannot support both a hospital and a separate aged care home. These facilities support older people to get the care they need in their local community.

Use the 'Find a provider' tool on the My Aged Care website to see if there's an MPS near you.

**[MyAgedCare.gov.au/find-a-provider](https://myagedcare.gov.au/find-a-provider)**

## **Better infrastructure**

Through the Aged Care Capital Assistance Program, we are providing infrastructure grants to aged care providers operating in regional, rural and remote areas to build, extend or upgrade their facilities, or build staff accommodation.

The grants will also support specialist providers to build and improve services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and First Nations communities.

**[health.gov.au/accap](https://health.gov.au/accap)**

## **Integrated care and place-based initiatives**

We are looking into ways to deliver a range of care and support services – such as disability supports, aged care and veterans' services – in regional, rural and remote areas and First Nations communities facing supply gap shortages. These initiatives aim to make providers more viable, provide better access to workforce and improve services for the community.

# Creating connections through volunteering

**We're helping older people and volunteers create meaningful connections in their community.**

## **Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme**

If you or an older person you know would benefit from friendship and companionship, you may like to explore the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme.

Volunteers who participate in the program are matched with older people and share interests, backgrounds or cultures where possible. Volunteers visit regularly and make a minimum of 20 visits per year. During a visit, you can do anything you both feel like doing, such as enjoy a chat over a cup of tea, take a walk or work on a joint hobby together.

The program creates meaningful friendships and has a positive impact on the lives of older people and volunteer visitors. Visits are available to anyone receiving government-subsidised residential aged care services or through a Home Care Package, including those on the National Priority System.

We encourage people from diverse backgrounds and experiences to join and be matched with older people from similar backgrounds.

To request a volunteer visitor for yourself or someone else, or to become a volunteer visitor, visit:

**[health.gov.au/acvvs](https://health.gov.au/acvvs)**

*From 1 July 2023 to 31 December 2023, 8,788 volunteers conducted a total of 131,837 visits to 10,195 recipients of the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme.*

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### **Volunteer visitor story – Peter and Jack**

*Each week, Peter visits Jack at his home in Adelaide. As a retired man himself, Peter first started to volunteer as a way to expand his social circle.*

*'I don't have a big social circle and I thought this was a good way for me to broaden my social connection and feel as if I'm part of a community,' says Peter. 'The trigger for me was the fact that there were no men visiting other men.'*

*Over time, Peter and Jack have developed a strong friendship. With Peter's help, Jack has been using a Dictaphone to record his life story.*

*'I've found this a very useful gadget, because I'm able to put down things which come to mind at any odd time to include in the autobiography. I have done it with Peter's help, a great deal of help. Hopefully it'll have a happy ending.'*

*'Peter, to me, is a godsend. Without his being here I would find it much more difficult to get on and I really look forward to his coming each week.'*

*'I would tell anybody who is capable of doing volunteering to please take it up, because there are many, many people such as myself who would just about die to have a volunteer call on them,' says Jack.*

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# **A valued and skilled workforce**

**A supported, skilled and diverse workforce will deliver safe, consistent, high-quality aged care services for older people.**

## **Pay rises for aged care workers**

The government has funded a 15 per cent award wage increase for many aged care workers, to support aged care nurses, personal care workers, head chefs and cooks, recreational officers and home care workers from 1 July 2023.

The government is committed to supporting the Fair Work Commission's Stage 3 decision to further increase award wages for many aged care workers and is working to meet the commencement date of 1 January 2025.

These award wage increases will make aged care work more attractive and retain staff to address critical workforce shortages, along with a range of workforce programs that are being rolled out across Australia.

## **Aged care nursing and allied health scholarships**

This scholarship program for enrolled and registered nurses, personal care workers and allied health professionals supports the aged care workforce to improve their expertise in areas such as palliative care, dementia care, infection prevention and control, and more. A guaranteed number of scholarships are available for First Nations people.

**[health.gov.au/news/aged-care-nursing-and-allied-health-scholarships](https://health.gov.au/news/aged-care-nursing-and-allied-health-scholarships)**

## **More skilled workers providing appropriate care**

The government is providing training opportunities for new and existing aged care workers. There are more opportunities for free or subsidised training through Fee-Free TAFE, such as the Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing), as well as university places and scholarships.

The Equip Aged Care Learning modules, developed by the University of Tasmania are an excellent resource for people currently working in aged care or seeking employment in the sector. They are also a great resource for families and informal



carers to understand the aged care sector. Each module takes around 10 minutes to complete and all modules are free.

**[equiplearning.utas.edu.au](http://equiplearning.utas.edu.au)**

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**Aged care is one of the fastest growing sectors in Australia. Interested in a career in aged care?**

**[health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/getting-into-the-workforce](http://health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/getting-into-the-workforce)**

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# Support with your aged care rights

**All older people have the right to receive safe, high-quality care and services and to be treated with dignity and respect.**

## **National Aged Care Advocacy Program**

The National Aged Care Advocacy Program (NACAP) supports older people, their families and representatives by:

- providing advocacy services
- helping you to understand and access the aged care system
- informing you of your aged care rights.

The NACAP is delivered by the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and their state and territory network members. It offers free, independent and confidential advocacy support, information and education to older people. Aged care advocates will speak up on your behalf if you want them to, when you need support to resolve issues with aged care.

**1800 700 600 between 8am–8pm Monday to Friday and 10am–4pm on Saturdays**

**[opan.org.au](http://opan.org.au)**

## **Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils Australia**

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils Australia (FECCA) is a national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**02 6282 5755**  
**[fecca.org.au](http://fecca.org.au)**

## **Making a complaint**

If you have a concern about the care you or someone else is receiving, it's important that you talk about it.

Making a complaint is not 'being difficult'. Most aged care providers do their best to provide quality care and services for older people, but issues can occur so it's important to be able to raise your concerns in a constructive and safe way.

If you have a concern or complaint that you've not been able to resolve by talking with your service provider, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission can help you to resolve your concern or complaint.

**1800 951 822**

**[AgedCareQuality.gov.au/making-complaint](https://agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint)**

# **Aged Care Council of Elders**

**The Aged Care Council of Elders is a group of older people from diverse backgrounds with lived experiences of ageing and aged care.**

The Council helps shape the aged care system by engaging with older people about the changes to aged care and listening to what is important to them. The Council provides advice to the government about the aged care reforms and ageing well.

The Council plays an important role in representing the views of all older people and ensuring the insights and needs of a diverse range of people are considered as changes are made to the aged care system.

**[health.gov.au/council-of-elders](http://health.gov.au/council-of-elders)**

**[facebook.com/groups/AgedCareCouncilOfElders](https://facebook.com/groups/AgedCareCouncilOfElders)**

# Let's change aged care together

Thousands of people have been involved in shaping the reforms so far through surveys, webinars, online workshops, consultation papers and face-to-face events.

There are plenty of opportunities for you to have your say about the changes to aged care:

- Sign up to receive *EngAged*, our monthly newsletter for older people:  
**[health.gov.au/aged-care-newsletter-subscribe](https://health.gov.au/aged-care-newsletter-subscribe)**
- Visit the Aged Care Engagement Hub to find out about the latest consultation opportunities and outcomes:  
**[AgedCareEngagement.health.gov.au/get-involved](https://AgedCareEngagement.health.gov.au/get-involved)**

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**‘If aged people are given the slightest opportunity to speak, to contribute, to make a difference, they will thrive.’**  
– Gillian Groom, AO, member of the Council of Elders

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