



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care



Aged care reforms

**A guide for providers
and the sector**

What's new in this booklet

This booklet is for aged care providers and the sector. The previous version of this booklet – released October 2024 – gave an overview of the aged care reforms in light of the September 2024 announcement around the new Aged Care Act, the Support at Home program and changes to aged care funding.

The start of the new Aged Care Act from 1 July 2025 marks one of the most significant changes to Australia's aged care system. Our focus with this booklet update is to support you to achieve operational readiness as these changes begin.

This updated booklet gives an overview of the changes that are coming and serves as a practical resource to outline provider requirements under the new Act. It will help you get ready for the new Act and provide you with guidance on where you can access more information. This will help you play your critical role in delivering the high-quality, rights-based care older people in Australia deserve.

We update this booklet regularly. The next iteration will be published in the second half of 2025. We'll share the updated version at sector events we attend and promote through the *Your Aged Care Update* newsletter once available.

Join our newsletter mailing list and stay up to date with issues affecting the aged care sector:

 health.gov.au/aged-care-newsletter-subscribe

Download a digital copy of this booklet:

 health.gov.au/changing-aged-care-together



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Improving Australia's aged care system

Over the last few years, the Australian Government and the sector have made major changes to aged care in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. These wide-ranging reforms have provided positive change, increasing transparency and improving quality of care provided to older people in Australia.

The Australian Government works closely with peak bodies and other groups that represent and advocate for the needs of older people, including for example: the Aged Care Transition Taskforce, the Aged Care Council of Elders, COTA, the National Aged Care Advisory Council and the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN).

These changes to aged care will help to deliver:

- high-quality care for older people
- better conditions for workers
- a sustainable, innovative sector.

Improvements we've made so far

We've already made big changes to aged care:

- A new Aged Care Act (new Act) from 1 July 2025 enacting a range of improvements for older people.
- A new regulatory model from 1 July 2025 to promote stronger working relationships, transparency and engagement in the aged care sector.
- Funding reforms to make aged care more sustainable and fairer.
- Introducing a Statement of Rights to ensure older people accessing and receiving aged care are at the centre of care delivery.
- Strengthening the Aged Care Quality Standards to improve the quality of care older people receive.
- The new Support at Home program commencing from 1 July 2025 to help older people remain living at home for longer.
- A Single Assessment System to make it easier for older people to access aged care and adapt services as their needs change.
- Providing \$17.7 billion in funding to deliver award wage increases for aged care workers. The most recent increase took place from 1 March 2025.
- Publishing Star Ratings to help older people and their representatives to compare the quality of aged care homes.
- Introducing mandatory care minutes to a sector average of 215 care minutes per resident per day, including 44 minutes of registered nurse care from 1 October 2024.
- Funding to improve the needs understanding of the aged care workforce to deliver culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed services to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Establishing a Food, Nutrition and Dining Hotline for aged care residents.
- Introducing a Code of Conduct for Aged Care to ensure services are delivered in a safe, competent and respectful manner.

Helping you navigate the reforms

We are here to help you understand what is changing in aged care and what you need to do.



health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-reforms/navigating-the-reforms

Aged care reforms roadmap

The aged care reform roadmap provides an indicative timeline for key reform activities. It is updated regularly to keep the sector informed.



health.gov.au/aged-care-reform-roadmap

Digital changes in aged care

Digital reform will support more efficient, high quality and person-centred care.

We are supporting aged care providers to understand and adjust to important digital systems changes that are required to operate under the new Aged Care Act and Support at Home program from 1 July 2025.

We will continue to enhance digital systems over time, in line with the Data and Digital Roadmap.



health.gov.au/resources/publications/data-and-digital-roadmap-digital-changes-in-aged-care-in-2025

Digital systems and capabilities

Alongside other government agencies, we will update our systems and introduce new digital solutions to support you to deliver higher quality and better-connected aged care.

Aged care digital systems and capabilities need to be uplifted in line with the new Act and the Support at Home program from 1 July 2025. We will continue to transform and improve digital systems in 2025-26.

Staging digital change allows:

- the best results for older people
- a smooth transition for the aged care sector.

What do I need to do?

Check what digital changes are coming and how to prepare.



health.gov.au/aged-care-reforms-digital

The new Aged Care Act

The *Aged Care Act 2024* starts from 1 July 2025. It delivers major changes to aged care and puts older people at the centre of the new system. The new Act replaces existing legislation and will become the main law that sets out how the aged care system works, including:

- a Statement of Rights for older people
- who can access aged care services
- funding of aged care services, including what the government will pay and what an older person can be asked to pay
- the Support at Home program
- the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards which outline what quality and safe aged care services look like
- stronger powers for the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC).

The new Act covers aged care programs that aged care laws did not cover in the past. For example, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) program and the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).



Embedding a rights-based approach in the new Act

The new Act puts the rights of older people first. It will change how aged care services are delivered to older people in their homes, community settings and residential aged care homes, and ensure that older people get the care and dignity they deserve.

The new Act includes a Statement of Rights, which will replace the current Charter of Aged Care Rights. It sets out older people's right to:

- make their own decisions about their own life
- have their decisions not just accepted, but respected
- get information and support to help them make decisions
- communicate their wishes, needs and preferences
- feel safe and respected
- have their culture and identity respected
- stay connected with their community.

You'll need to ensure your aged care residents and home care participants are aware of their rights and protections including the Statement of Rights, as well as the new registered supporter role and changes to participant information.

As a provider, you may need to make changes to your organisation's policies, business processes, training, and information and communication technology (ICT) systems, to ensure that the services you deliver are consistent with the Statement of Rights and Statement of Principles.

 health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-act/rights

What the new Act means for you as a provider

Under the new Act, you will be part of a better-regulated system that is transparent and accountable. The new Act will introduce a new regulatory model. This will support the ACQSC to target its resources in the areas of higher risk and recognise innovation and excellence in aged care services.

You need to understand which obligations under the new Act apply to your organisation and what changes must be made in preparation for 1 July.

 health.gov.au/aged-care-act

The new regulatory model

The new regulatory model sets out how the sector will work under the new Act – emphasising stronger working relationships, transparency and collaboration.

It will introduce:

- universal registration – a single registration for each provider across all aged care programs
- registration categories that reflect the different types of care older people access and the types of services available to be delivered under each registration category
- provider obligations that are risk-proportionate and reflect the types of services delivered
- more protections that place the rights and needs of older people at the centre of aged care
- ways for providers to demonstrate and be recognised for service delivery excellence.

Your registration and renewal processes will be simpler. There will be a single registration for each organisation across all of the aged care programs they deliver. For organisations delivering multiple aged care programs this will result in a single process to register and renew registration, as well as consolidated obligations and reporting requirements.

Under the new regulatory model there will be core conditions that apply to all registered providers, including conditions that relate to:

- Statement of Rights
- Aged Care Code of Conduct
- worker screening requirements
- compliance with applicable laws
- protecting personal information (as is currently required under the Act).



health.gov.au/our-work/new-model-for-regulating-aged-care

Financial and prudential standards

You will also need to meet the new Financial and Prudential Standards from 1 July 2025, with the new Aged Care Act. The Standards set out the minimum requirements for good financial and prudential management of registered aged care providers.



AgedCareQuality.gov.au/resource-library/new-financial-and-prudential-standards

Other conditions and obligations

Other conditions or obligations will only apply to some providers, for example, providers who are registered in a specific registration category. This will help make sure obligations on providers are proportionate and address specific risks.

The strengthened Quality Standards are one example of an obligation that will also apply to some providers, depending on the services they provide.

What do I need to do?

If you are an existing provider:

You'll automatically be recognised as a registered provider from 1 July 2025, based on the services you currently deliver.

Between April and June 2025, we will communicate with all current aged care providers in preparation for this transition. This includes a preview of proposed registration categories and the initial date for renewal of registration under the new Act. We are doing this to minimise the administrative impact on providers and allow you to continue to provide quality aged care services to older people.

If you are a new provider:

You will need to apply for registration with the ACQSC after 1 July 2025. New applicants must meet the registration requirements under the new Act.



AgedCareQuality.gov.au/providers/reform-changes-providers/registration-and-renewal



health.gov.au/regulating-aged-care



Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

The Aged Care Quality Standards define what good care looks like and reflect the quality of care older people should expect.

We have strengthened the Quality Standards to:

- focus on areas like person-centred care, clinical care, diversity, dementia care, food and nutrition, partnership with older people and provider governance
- be user friendly and measurable
- use simpler language and reduce duplication
- reference the new Statement of Rights.

We worked with the aged care sector, older people, their families and carers, advocates and experts to strengthen the Quality Standards. The ACQSC also tested the new audit process with providers.

Under the strengthened Quality Standards, providers will receive a graded assessment against each standard to encourage excellence in aged care service delivery. For residential providers (excluding NATSIFAC residential providers) your graded assessment will also affect your Star Ratings.

The strengthened Quality Standards will apply when the new Act starts on 1 July 2025.



health.gov.au/quality-standards

What do I need to do?

Read the ACQSC guidance material to help you and your workforce prepare for the strengthened Quality Standards:



AgedCareQuality.gov.au/providers/quality-standards/strengthened-quality-standards

Consider completing the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards Readiness Checklist to ensure your organisation is prepared if registered in categories 4, 5 and 6:



AgedCareQuality.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/strengthened_standards_provider_checklist_10_feb_2025.pdf

Worker screening

Worker screening is part of a national worker registration scheme that we are progressively rolling out for the sector. Changes to worker screening will begin from 1 July 2025 in line with the new Act. These changes will mostly impact people working for CHSP providers. This will pave the way for broader changes to aged care worker screening in 2026.

There will continue to be two screening options for aged care. All aged care workers and responsible persons, such as CEOs and Board Members, will still need one of the following:

- a police certificate (not older than three years) that does not record certain offences **or**
- a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Worker Check.

If a person's police certificate expires after 1 July 2025, but before the new aged care worker screening process starts in 2026, they will need to provide their employer a new police certificate.

Together with states and territories, the Australian Government is working towards the introduction of requirements for aged care worker screening to align with the NDIS requirements. This new national worker screening system will mean more robust screening checks for the aged care sector.

An aged care worker screening check will be recognised in the NDIS sector and vice versa. Final arrangements are subject to agreement with the states and territories, and will not commence before 2026.



health.gov.au/resources/publications/fact-sheet-for-providers-aged-care-worker-screening-from-1-july-2025

What do I need to do?

From 1 July 2025, you must continue to ensure each aged care worker and responsible person has a valid police certificate or an NDIS Worker Check.

You must not allow a person to become or continue as an aged care worker or responsible person if their police certificate records a precluding offence or if they are convicted of a precluding offence while employed. If in doubt, you should seek legal advice regarding the refusal or termination of a person's employment on the basis of their criminal record.

You do not need to do anything to prepare for the new national worker screening system yet. We are working with states and territories to plan for implementation and will share information with providers as soon as it is available.



health.gov.au/worker-screening

Help protect older people's decision-making

From 1 July 2025, older people can ask to register a supporter, if they want to. Registered supporters help older people to make and communicate aged care decisions.

Registering as a supporter does not mean someone can make decisions on behalf of an older person, and providers must still go to the older person for decisions about their own care.

Having a registered supporter does not stop older people from doing something they can do themselves.

Older people's ability to make decisions and communicate their wishes may change daily, or over time. Understanding who their registered supporters are and the role they play is essential to respecting an older person's rights.

If an older person has a representative active in My Aged Care on 30 June 2025, they will become a registered supporter under the new Act.

Regular and authorised representatives and older people with regular representatives can opt out of being or having a supporter before 30 June 2025 through their My Aged Care Online Account, or by calling My Aged Care.

What do I need to do?

From 1 July 2025, find out if older people in your care have registered supporter(s) by asking them, or through the My Aged Care Service and Support Portal.



[MyAgedCare.gov.au/arranging-someone-support-you/upcoming-changes-support-roles-and-relationships](https://myagedcare.gov.au/arranging-someone-support-you/upcoming-changes-support-roles-and-relationships)



Complaints and feedback

The new Act establishes a Complaints Commissioner, appointed by the Minister for Aged Care. The Complaints Commissioner will work inside the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to provide an independent and transparent process for the investigation and resolution of aged care complaints.

Older people will be encouraged to share their feedback and be able to make a complaint if they feel their provider has not upheld their rights.

You must have a system in place to manage complaints and to receive feedback in accordance with any requirements prescribed by the rules. It is expected that you will aim to resolve complaints quickly and in a restorative way.



[AgedCareQuality.gov.au/older-australians/reform-changes-older-people/making-complaint](https://agedcarequality.gov.au/older-australians/reform-changes-older-people/making-complaint)

Whistleblower protections

The new Act includes a condition on providers' registration that they must have an internal whistleblower system and policy and handle whistleblower disclosures in accordance with any requirements prescribed in the rules.



[AgedCareQuality.gov.au/workers/reform-changes-workers/protection-whistleblowers](https://agedcarequality.gov.au/workers/reform-changes-workers/protection-whistleblowers)



Reporting requirements for providers

As a provider, you are accountable for your services. You must:

- keep proper records, in line with the *Records Principles 2014* (and from 1 July 2025, in line with the new Act and related new Aged Care Rules).
- ensure your staff and volunteers have screening clearances
- complete financial and operational reports.

Why reporting matters

Reporting helps us to:

- ensure provider funding is based on actual care costs
- identify and support at-risk providers
- ensure effective governance
- monitor the quality and safety of service delivery.

Submitting and publishing reports

Reports are submitted through:

- the Aged Care Financial Report (ACFR)
- the Quarterly Financial Report (QFR), including care minutes
- the Provider Operations Collection Form
- 24/7 registered nurse coverage
- grant reporting systems
- the National Aged Care Mandatory Quality Indicator Program.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) providers will report information on their organisation and delivery of care according to their registration categories (e.g. Service Activity reports).

We publish report outcomes through:

- aged care research and reporting, for sector performance updates
- the My Aged Care Find a provider tool, for individual home and service provider updates, including as part of Star Ratings.

You must also report on the delivery of quality aged care services.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care/providing-aged-care-services/reporting#reporting-requirements

Government Provider Management System

The Government Provider Management System (GPMS) makes it easier for you to view and manage information the government holds about your organisation and services. It also streamlines government reporting requirements.

Check your organisation's information is correct in GPMS if you have access, or through your Funding Arrangement Manager, for your services, locations and key personnel contact details. Review the provider registration preview (PDF format) information and the actions required to complete it from early April.

 health.gov.au/gpms

 health.gov.au/resources/collections/government-provider-management-system-resources

Business to Government

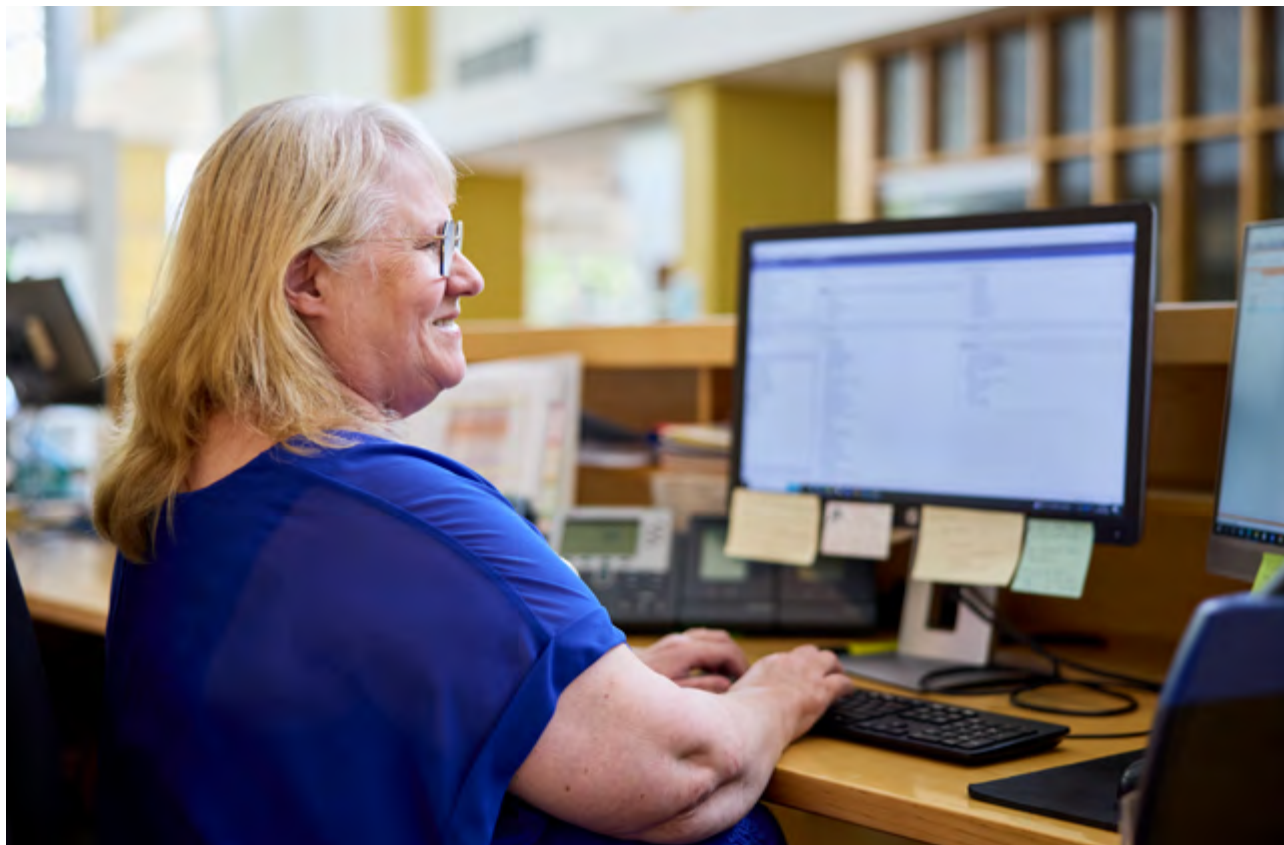
We are building technology connections to simplify provider reporting between aged care businesses and government agencies.

Business to Government (B2G) will:

- streamline quality indicator and 24/7 registered nurse reporting
- seamlessly connect provider and government systems.

Ask your software vendor or IT operations team to investigate opportunities to upgrade your ICT systems.

 health.gov.au/business-to-government



About the Single Assessment System

The Single Assessment System for aged care has 3 key parts:

- The Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) started as the new tool for assessing eligibility for Australian Government-funded aged care on 1 July 2024.
- The Single Assessment System workforce brought together 3 different assessment workforces on 9 December 2024.
- New First Nations assessment organisations will be rolled out in a phased approach from 1 July 2025 to provide more choice for culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed assessments for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Under the new Single Assessment System workforce, assessment organisations are funded to conduct:

- all aged care needs assessments (both home support/simple and comprehensive/complex) for access to in-home, flexible and residential aged care, and/or
- residential aged care funding assessments.

See a full list of assessment organisations under the Single Assessment System workforce by state and territory and region:



health.gov.au/resources/publications/single-assessment-system-assessment-organisations-by-service-area-region-state-and-territory

You can also find assessment organisations by Aged Care Planning Region on our searchable map (scan QR code).

State and territory governments will continue to deliver hospital-based assessments.

We also introduced Triage Delegates who undertake a short triage process with an older person within 2 weeks of receiving referrals for an aged care needs assessment.

The Single Assessment System will support about 500,000 older people who seek access to aged care services each year. There are no changes to aged care eligibility requirements or referrals to urgent services.



health.gov.au/single-assessment-system

First Nations assessments

From 1 July 2025, First Nations assessment organisations will provide more choice for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking assessments that are:

- culturally safe
- trauma informed
- better able to connect them with appropriate services.

First Nations assessments will also aim to increase the uptake of aged care services for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These services will progressively roll out and cover more of Australia.

This pathway will grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce and strengthen ties with the Aboriginal Community Controlled sector. The organisations will help older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and carers, access aged care services across urban, regional and remote Australia.



health.gov.au/our-work/single-assessment-system/needs/first-nations-aged-care-assessments



Changes to in-home care

About Support at Home

The new Support at Home program will replace the Home Care Packages Program and Short-Term Restorative Care Programme on 1 July 2025. The Commonwealth Home Support Program will transition to Support at Home no earlier than 1 July 2027.



Support at Home will ensure improved access to services, equipment and home modifications to help older people remain healthy, active and socially connected to their community.

Support at Home will provide:

- easier access to upfront supports to maintain independence
- 3 short-term pathways – Restorative Care Pathway, End-of-Life Pathway and the Assistive Technology and Home Modifications Scheme
- new classifications and budgets to better meet the needs of older people
- reformed participant contributions.

For the first year of Support at Home you will set your own prices, as you have done under the Home Care Packages Program. From 1 July 2026 government-set price caps will apply.

Eligible providers operating in rural and remote areas, or providing specialised services, can periodically apply for additional funding to support their financial viability and ensure service continuity.



What do I need to do?

Read the Support at Home Program Manual to understand and comply with the Support at Home program rules, procedures and obligations:



health.gov.au/resources/publications/support-at-home-program-manual-a-guide-for-registered-providers

If you are a provider of the Home Care Packages Program and you are transitioning to Support at Home, read the Support at Home Program Provider Transition Guide:



health.gov.au/resources/publications/support-at-home-program-provider-transition-guide

Read the Support at Home: Claims and Payments Business Rules Guidance to understand claims and processing under the new program:



health.gov.au/resources/publications/support-at-home-claims-and-payments-business-rules-guidance

Read the Support at Home pricing guidance to help you set your prices for the first year of the program:



health.gov.au/resources/publications/guidance-for-setting-support-at-home-prices-fact-sheet-for-providers



health.gov.au/support-at-home

Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

The CHSP has been extended until 30 June 2027. As a CHSP provider, you will move to the new Support at Home program no earlier than 1 July 2027, giving you more time to prepare.

CHSP focuses on building the strength and abilities of older people so they can live independently and safely at home.

Providers must:

- ensure your clients have been registered on My Aged Care and assessed as eligible for CHSP services
- ensure clients have a service agreement based on their support needs to support clarity of services, charges and other obligations of CHSP providers and ensure the rights of CHSP providers are upheld
- support them to safely keep doing things for themselves when possible
- review clients' needs and services every 12 months
- meet relevant Aged Care Quality Standards.

Under the CHSP 2025-27 extension, there will be changes to the way that services are regulated and delivered. These changes will help ensure providers are compliant with the new Aged Care Act and prepare for transition to Support at Home. Further information to support CHSP providers can be found in *The new regulatory model – Guidance for CHSP providers* resource:



health.gov.au/resources/publications/the-new-regulatory-model-guidance-for-chsp-providers

CHSP remains grant funded with payments paid at the end of each month. Providers deliver services to eligible My Aged Care assessed clients according to the services and locations outlined in their contracts.

A client contribution towards the cost of the service delivery is part of the core framework of the program to complement the subsidy grant funding provided by the Commonwealth.

 health.gov.au/resources/publications/the-new-regulatory-model-guidance-for-chsp-providers

What do I need to do?

You are responsible for maintaining your information of service description and availability on their My Aged Care site. You report service delivery through the DataExchange which is monitored by the Community Grants Hub on the Department of Health and Aged Care's behalf.

You must ensure all of your clients are registered on My Aged Care and have been assessed as eligible for CHSP services, including any clients that have previously been 'grandfathered'. This will enable CHSP clients to continue to receive CHSP services from 1 July 2025.

The Department's website has information, resources and factsheets about why it is important that all clients are registered and assessed, actions for providers can take to assist clients get registered and assessed and a template of a letter to send to unassessed clients to help start this conversation.

Call the Provider and Assessor Help Line 1800 836 799 for assistance.

 health.gov.au/chsp

 health.gov.au/our-work/chsp/reforms



Residential care reforms

Accommodation Funding Reform

From 1 July 2025, the Government is introducing reforms to accommodation funding arrangements to improve provider viability, with the introduction of:

- Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD) and Refundable Accommodation Contribution (RAC) retention arrangements – providers will be required to deduct a small portion of each eligible RAD or RAC calculated at a rate of 2% per annum, with the retention period limited to five years
- Daily Accommodation Payment (DAP) indexation arrangements – whereby providers will index the DAPs of eligible residents on 20 March and 20 September each year in line with changes in the consumer price index.

This will only apply to residents that first enter permanent residential aged care on or after 1 July 2025.

The Government has also increased the Maximum Accommodation Payment Amount that a provider can charge without approval from the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority from \$550,000 to \$750,000 on 1 January 2025. This amount will be indexed on 1 July each year.

What do I need to do?

From 1 July 2025, providers will need to ensure that they deduct retention amounts from the eligible RADs and RACs of new residents that pay by lump sum (either in part or full). On each 20 March and 20 September they will also need to index the DAPs of eligible residents that pay periodic payments (either in part or full).



health.gov.au/resources/publications/response-to-the-aged-care-taskforce-accommodation-reform

Changes to residential care place allocation

From 1 July 2025, when the new Aged Care Act commences, residential aged care places will be allocated to people, not providers. This gives older people more choice over where they live.

The government will no longer decide where or when residential care places are allocated (except in the case of specialist aged care providers, such as NATSIFAC). Once a person is approved for residential care they will be allocated a residential place immediately. They can use this place to move into an aged care home of their choice. Government funding will follow the older person to their chosen provider.

What do I need to do?

In the lead up to 1 July 2025 you should review your residential care places and take necessary action with your local State or Territory office. This may include applying for new places through the 'bed-ready' arrangements, making places operational, varying conditions of allocation, relinquishing offline or provisional places that you don't need, and transferring, combining or closing services.

From 1 July 2025 you will need to register new homes and vary existing homes with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. You will still manage your own waitlists and admission processes.

You should consider how best to succeed under the new arrangements. This may include adjusting or expanding your service offerings to better meet consumer preferences and market demand.



health.gov.au/PlacesToPeople



Star Ratings

Since December 2022, Star Ratings for residential aged care have been published on the My Aged Care website via the Find a provider tool. Star Ratings are published as an Overall Star Rating, as well as against 4 sub-categories:

1. **Residents' Experience** makes up 33% of a home's Overall Star Rating.
2. **Compliance** makes up 30% of a home's Overall Star Rating.
3. **Staffing makes** up 22% of a home's Overall Star Rating.
4. **Quality Measures** makes up 15% of a home's Overall Star Rating.

Star Ratings provide nationally consistent measures for providers to monitor, compare and improve care quality.

From commencement of the new Aged Care Act, Star Ratings will transition to a re-designed Compliance rating. This is in line with changes to the regulatory model and commencement of graded assessment by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission against the strengthened Quality Standards.

The re-designed Compliance rating will incorporate regulatory notices and graded performance against the strengthened Quality Standards, offering a more detailed and accurate reflection of an aged care home's performance.

Graded performance against the strengthened Standards will include findings of major and minor non-conformance, resolved non-conformance, full conformance and exceeding conformance.

The strengthened Quality Standards lift expectations of providers, raising the bar for quality and compliance in aged care. This encourages continuous improvement and higher standards of care.

What do I need to do?

We encourage you to download:

- the **Star Ratings Provider Manual**, which provides detailed information about Star Ratings design, calculation and reporting requirements
- the **Star Ratings Improvement Manual** to access practical examples to help plan, implement and assess quality improvement, to achieve better care outcomes and improved Star Ratings.



health.gov.au/star-ratings

Refining the care minutes responsibility

From October 2024, the care minutes responsibility increased to a sector-wide average of 215 care minutes per resident per day, including 44 minutes of direct care by a registered nurse (RN).

You can use enrolled nurses (ENs) for up to 10% of your RN care minutes. For example, for a residential aged care home with a target of 44 RN minutes, up to 4.4 of those minutes may be delivered by an EN.

From 1 October 2025, aged care homes will need to meet both of their care minute targets to achieve a Staffing rating of 3 stars or more. The way the care minutes responsibility works will not change under the new Act. That is, you are required to meet both your RN and total care minutes targets. However, you may see a change in funding and Star Rating if an aged care home is not meeting both care minutes targets.

From October 2025, aged care homes need to meet both of their care minutes targets to achieve a Staffing rating of 3 or more stars. This change will be reflected in Star Ratings published on the My Aged Care website from the second Star Ratings quarterly update in 2026.

From 1 April 2026, the Government will link care funding for residential aged care homes in metropolitan areas (MM1) to the delivery of their care minutes. Aged care homes not meeting their care minutes targets will see their care funding reduce from this time. The amount will depend on the home's reported care minutes performance from the October – December quarter onwards. If you meet your targets, your funding will not change.

Specialised homeless services in MM1 areas, and aged care homes in MM2-MM7 areas, won't be affected by this change.



health.gov.au/resources/publications/changes-coming-to-care-minutes-funding



health.gov.au/mandatory-care

Aged care on-site pharmacists in residential aged care homes

Funding is available for eligible community pharmacies and aged care providers to employ aged care on-site pharmacists in residential aged care homes.

On-site pharmacists can assist with the medication management for the people in your care, reviewing medications regularly and supporting the quality use of medicines. They also work collaboratively with residents and the aged care team to improve residents' health outcomes and build confidence with families and carers.

Residential aged care homes and community pharmacies can learn more, and apply to participate, through the Pharmacy Programs Administrator. Primary Health Networks are also able to assist residential aged care homes with their participation. Participation is voluntary.



health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-on-site-pharmacist

General Practice in Aged Care Incentive

The General Practice in Aged Care Incentive promotes continuous, quality care. Since 1 July 2024, eligible general practitioners (GPs) and practices registered with both MyMedicare and General Practice in Aged Care Incentive are able to receive incentive payments. These incentive payments are for providing regular visits and care planning to older people living in aged care.

 health.gov.au/our-work/gpaci

National Aged Care Mandatory Quality Indicator Program

The QI Program collects quality indicator data from residential aged care homes quarterly. This data provides an evidence base that can be used to improve the quality of services provided to aged care home residents.

In April 2025 we expanded the QI Program to include 3 new staffing quality indicators for:

- enrolled nurses
- allied health
- lifestyle officers.

 health.gov.au/quality-indicators

National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines

In July 2024, the National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines were introduced. The Principles and Guidelines outline practical changes that you can make to improve residents' quality of life and support safe workplaces for your staff. They include design strategies that can be made to the design of both new and existing aged care homes.

 health.gov.au/designing-residential-aged-care



Support for your business

Aged Care Business and Workforce Advisory Service

This advisory service allows eligible aged care providers – including those in regional, rural and remote areas – to apply for free, independent and confidential advice to improve their operations.

The service assists providers review their operations and provide advice on:

- business management
- financial strategies
- workforce challenges.

Read **examples and case studies** of services available through the Aged Care Business and Workforce Advisory Service.



health.gov.au/bwas



Aged Care Capital Assistance Program

The program provides grants to build, extend or upgrade aged care homes or to build staff accommodation where older people have limited or no access. The program aims to increase access to quality aged care services in thin market settings for people:

- from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- who live in regional, rural, and remote areas
- who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, or
- who have other complex and diverse needs, including dementia.

Program funding is ongoing. Funding priorities and eligibility will be determined on a round-by-round basis and clarified through grant opportunity guidelines. These guidelines will be published on GrantConnect at the beginning of each grant round.



grants.gov.au



health.gov.au/accap

Infection prevention and control

We provide guidelines and support to help you prepare for, prevent and manage outbreaks, including COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

Our guidelines aim to help you with best practice information for the prevention and management of outbreaks of acute respiratory infection (including COVID-19, influenza and RSV).

Residential aged care providers are responsible for making sure your residents have easy access to vaccinations and antiviral treatments. You should work with Primary Health Networks (PHNs) and care providers, including GPs and pharmacists, to ensure residents are up to date with the latest vaccine recommendations. Vaccination remains the most effective protection against severe illness and hospitalisation.

Where providers are not meeting the requirements of the Aged Care Quality Standards and are placing the health and safety of residents at risk, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will take action.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care/managing-respiratory-infection

Supporting your workforce

Award wage increases for aged care workers

Funding is being provided to aged care providers to meet the increased costs of aged care award wages.

These award wage rates have increased due to decisions made by the Fair Work Commission as part of the Aged Care Work Value Case.

As a result:

- Many registered and enrolled nurses working in aged care have received award wage increases from 1 March 2025, with further increases on 1 October 2025 and 1 August 2026.
- These award wage increases apply to registered and enrolled nurses in aged care on the Nurses Award 2020.

These increases build on the previous:

- Award wage increases provided to many aged care workers from 1 January 2025 (Stage 3), with some workers receiving further increases on 1 October 2025.
- 15% award wage increase provided to direct care workers in 2023 (Stage 2).

You will receive additional funding to help cover the award wage increases through existing funding arrangements and new grant opportunities.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/what-were-doing/better-and-fairer-wages



Helping providers build their workforce

We are helping providers build and strengthen a valued, supported and skilled workforce to meet the needs and rights of older people. Help is available through:

- the Rural, Remote and First Nations Aged Care Service Development Assistance Panel (SDAP)
- the Aged Care Business and Workforce Advisory Service (BWAS)
- the Rural Locum Assistance Program for Aged Care (Rural LAP Aged Care)
- the Indigenous Employment Initiative.



health.gov.au/building-the-workforce

Sponsoring overseas workers

Migration can also help with workforce shortages. Providers can use government supports to sponsor overseas direct care workers. This includes the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme and the Aged Care Industry Labour Agreement, where there is evidence of genuine local labour shortages.

There are dedicated Business, Industry and Regional Outreach (BIRO) officers to provide information to businesses to help understand visa pathway options for workers.

 immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/visas/employing-and-sponsoring-someone/business-industry-and-regional-outreach

 health.gov.au/building-the-workforce

Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia (ARIIA)

Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia (ARIIA) is an independent organisation established to lead the advancement of aged care workforce capability through innovation, including use of technology and by translating evidence into broad practice in the aged care sector.

ARIIA has several initiatives to assist the take-up of innovation. These include the Innovation Capability Program, LIFT Leadership Program and the Aged Care Partnering Program. These programs equip the aged care workforce and leaders with the knowledge, skills and confidence to adapt, apply and implement innovative solutions to solve problems in their workplace.

Additionally, ARIIA's Knowledge and Implementation Hub (Hub) provides access to evidence and resources on a range of priority topics for aged care. Topics were identified by the aged care sector and include clinical governance, dementia care and social isolation. Information on urgent and critical needs in the sector is also available on the Hub.

 ariia.org.au



Indigenous Employment Initiative Program

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are supported to gain training and employment to deliver culturally appropriate care to older people. The program funds over 80 organisations to employ and train staff to support in the delivery of aged care services.

 health.gov.au/our-work/indigenous-employment-initiative-program

Training opportunities

Training opportunities for aged care workers

The government is providing training opportunities to help build a valued, skilled and supported aged care workforce. This will enable more skilled workers to deliver safe, consistent, high-quality aged care services that meet the needs and rights of older people. You will need to ensure your workers are aware of the upcoming changes and provide training for your workforce.



health.gov.au/aged-care-learning-and-development

Free training opportunities

Free and subsidised training opportunities are available for aged care workers.



health.gov.au/resources/publications/free-training-opportunities-for-aged-care-workers

Free palliative care education and training

To support the delivery of palliative care in Australia, we fund organisations to produce resources and provide education and training courses. Palliative care training can increase your workforce's knowledge and skills to communicate with and care for people who have a life-limiting illness and assist your organisation to meet the requirements of the Strengthened Aged Care Standards.



health.gov.au/palliative-care-training

Planning for Diversity workshop series

This workshop series can help you make your services more inclusive of older people from diverse and marginalised groups. Planning for Diversity is especially beneficial for aged care staff responsible for quality improvement, service planning and compliance.



opan.org.au/education/education-for-professionals/diversity-education

Silver Rainbow training

This awareness training offers information and support to help you deliver inclusive and respectful care to older people who are LGBTI. Silver Rainbow is beneficial for aged care services, assessment teams, allied health services and others in the aged care sector.



lgbtiqhealth.org.au/silver-rainbow-training

Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICACs)

PICACs are organisations that can support you to provide aged care that meets the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people. They provide face-to-face and online workshops, training and information sessions, and resources such as fact sheets and guides. There is a PICAC organisation for each state and territory and help ensure aged care staff have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of CALD older people in their care.



health.gov.au/picac

Healing Foundation

Information and resources are available to support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed aged care in or close to their community. The Healing Foundation has a Healing Portal hub which brings together culturally appropriate information about working with, and supporting, older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



healingfoundation.org.au/healing-portal



Meeting the needs of diverse groups

Verification for providing specialised aged care services

As an aged care provider, you can be recognised on My Aged Care for the specialist care you offer to people with diverse backgrounds.

If you deliver specialised care for one or more of the following groups, you can apply to have this verified and displayed on My Aged Care:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people who are financially or socially disadvantaged
- veterans
- people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
- care leavers
- parents separated from their children by forced adoption or removal
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex people
- people who live in rural or remote areas.

This helps older people with diverse backgrounds, and their families and carers, find the right aged care service best suited to their needs. They can search for specialised care on My Aged Care's Find a provider tool, helping them find specialised service options in their local area.



health.gov.au/specialisation-verification



Language translation: Free aged care translation service

The Australian Government funds a translation service to help you communicate with older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Use this service to produce translated versions of print and digital materials in different languages, as well as 'Easy Read' or 'Plain English' translation.

To request a translation call **1800 271 034** or complete an online request form here:



DiversityAgedCare.health.gov.au/request-translation

Language interpreting: TIS National for aged care

The Australian Government funds your access to Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National. Services include:

- immediate 24/7 phone interpreting
- pre-booked phone interpreting
- on-site (in-person) interpreting
- Automated Telephone Interpreting Service (ATIS)
- video remote interpreting.

Use TIS National free of charge to communicate with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Register now for a TIS National client code:



tisonline.tisnational.gov.au/RegisterAgency



health.gov.au/tis-aged-care-providers

Sign language and captioning: National Sign Language Program (NSLP)

The NSLP supports the communication needs of Deaf, Deafblind and hard of hearing older people to engage with aged care services, take part in professional and social activities, and health and medical appointments that attract a Medicare rebate. NSLP is provided through Deaf Connect and includes:

- face-to-face and video interpreting
- Auslan, First Nations languages, American Sign Language, International Sign Language, and Signed English
- tactile signing and hand-over-hand signing for Deafblind people
- live captioning.

Providers can use these services by registering on the booking platform and then contacting Deaf Connect.



health.gov.au/our-work/nslp

Supporting people with dementia



National Dementia Action Plan

The National Dementia Action Plan 2024-2034 is a joint initiative between the Australian Government and state and territory governments. It includes 8 high-level actions aimed at increasing dementia awareness, reducing the population's risk of dementia, and driving better coordinated services for people living with dementia, their carers and families.



health.gov.au/our-work/national-dementia-action-plan

National Dementia Support Program

The National Dementia Support Program provides a wide range of support services for people living with dementia, their carers, families and representatives. Services include information, education, counselling, support activities, peer mentoring and advice over the phone, online and in-person across Australia.



health.gov.au/ndsp

Dementia Training Program

The Dementia Training Program provides free training and resources for the aged and health care sectors to improve the quality of care for people living with dementia. This includes training needs assessments and tailored training packages specific to provider needs. The program offers a national approach to education, upskilling and professional development in dementia care.



health.gov.au/dementia-training-program

Hospital to Aged Care Dementia Support Program

The Hospital to Aged Care Dementia Support Program helps older people living with dementia transition from hospital into residential aged care or home with aged care support. Dementia Support Australia is delivering the program on behalf of the Australian Government in 11 locations, with a presence in every state and territory.



health.gov.au/our-work/hacdsp

Dementia Respite Education and Mentoring

The Dementia Respite Education and Mentoring project is a new, innovative and flexible approach to respite training, offering a Community of Practice and coaching for aged care providers.



dream.utas.edu.au

Behaviour supports

The Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service provides individualised support and advice when mild to moderate behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia affect a person's care or quality of life. Trained consultants work in any location or setting to support service providers and individuals caring for people living with dementia. Residential aged care providers can request specialist assistance from Severe Behaviour Response Teams to address the needs of people living with severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia. Response Teams partner with the care and support network to understand the causes of changed behaviours and develop tailored care plans, as well as provide ongoing guidance to implement recommendations.



health.gov.au/dbmas



health.gov.au/sbrt

The Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service and Severe Behaviour Response Teams can be accessed, via Dementia Support Australia, on 1800 699 799 (24/7, 365 days a year).

Specialist Dementia Care

The Specialist Dementia Care Program supports people with very severe behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia where their support needs cannot be met in a residential aged care home. Transitional support is provided in a small dementia-friendly environment where people living with dementia receive personalised, goal-focused and specialised care to stabilise symptoms of dementia and to support transition back into less intensive care settings.



health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/specialist-dementia-care-program-sdcp

Rural and remote aged care

Multi-Purpose Service Program

We are working with state and territory governments to expand and improve the Multi-Purpose Service Program (MPSP). Commonwealth funding enables 29 MPS providers to deliver aged care across 183 MPS sites in rural and remote areas. This means that regional and remote communities can continue to offer integrated health and aged care services in areas that cannot support both a hospital and a separate aged care home.

To operate an MPS, you must be an approved provider. You must understand and carry out the responsibilities set out in law for aged care service providers.

 health.gov.au/multi-purpose-services

Rural Locum Assistance Program for Aged Care (Rural LAP Aged Care)

Providers in rural and remote areas affected by workforce shortages can access a short-term locum workforce, as well as relocation payments and annual retention bonuses to attract permanent staff.

Rural LAP Aged Care is available to assist providers affected by high staff turnover, sudden departures of key personnel, when staff take leave or undertake continuing professional development.

A permanent relocation payment is available to eligible aged care workers as a one-off payment of up to \$16,500 to cover immediate and direct costs associated with relocating to rural and remote areas within Australia. The employee may also be eligible to receive an annual retention bonus for two years following relocation and permanent employment.

Eligible aged care services are home care, residential care, Multi-Purpose Services and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care services located in Modified Monash locations MM 4-7, and Commonwealth Home Support Program services located in MM 6-7.

 ruralLAP.com.au/aged-care-services

Aged Care Workforce Remote Accord (Remote Accord)

The Remote Accord is made up of employers and experts delivering aged care services in remote and very remote areas of Australia. It connects remote services and communities to better understand challenges facing the workforce, what more can be done and what works well for older people living in remote and very remote communities.



acwra.org.au

Rural, Remote and First Nations Aged Care Service Development Assistance Panel (SDAP)

SDAP provides free professional support to aged care service providers who:

- are in rural or remote areas (MMM4 to MMM7), or
- provide care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Panel members help providers in three main areas:

- capability and support
- sector development
- infrastructure project management.

Panel members are qualified and experienced professionals who work with services to improve the way they deliver and administer aged care to address challenges like:

- clinical care
- financial and workforce planning
- governance and regulation
- policies and procedures
- training.



health.gov.au/our-work/rural-remote-and-first-nations-aged-care-service-development-assistance-panel-sdap



Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Helping you support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

We fund a range of programs to help older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people access quality and culturally safe aged care services. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access aged care services from age 50 and over. We are working with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to build sector capacity to deliver aged care services for their communities.

 health.gov.au/first-nations-aged-care

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFAC)

This program provides flexible, culturally safe care to meet the changing care needs of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. NATSIFAC providers deliver a mix of residential and home care services, in mostly rural and remote areas.

 MyAgedCare.gov.au/support-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people

 health.gov.au/natsifac



Local networks across Australia

The Local Network of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care use their local knowledge to collaborate, build and leverage relationships to support provider capability, and inform government policy, and get better outcomes for our communities when accessing health and aged care services.

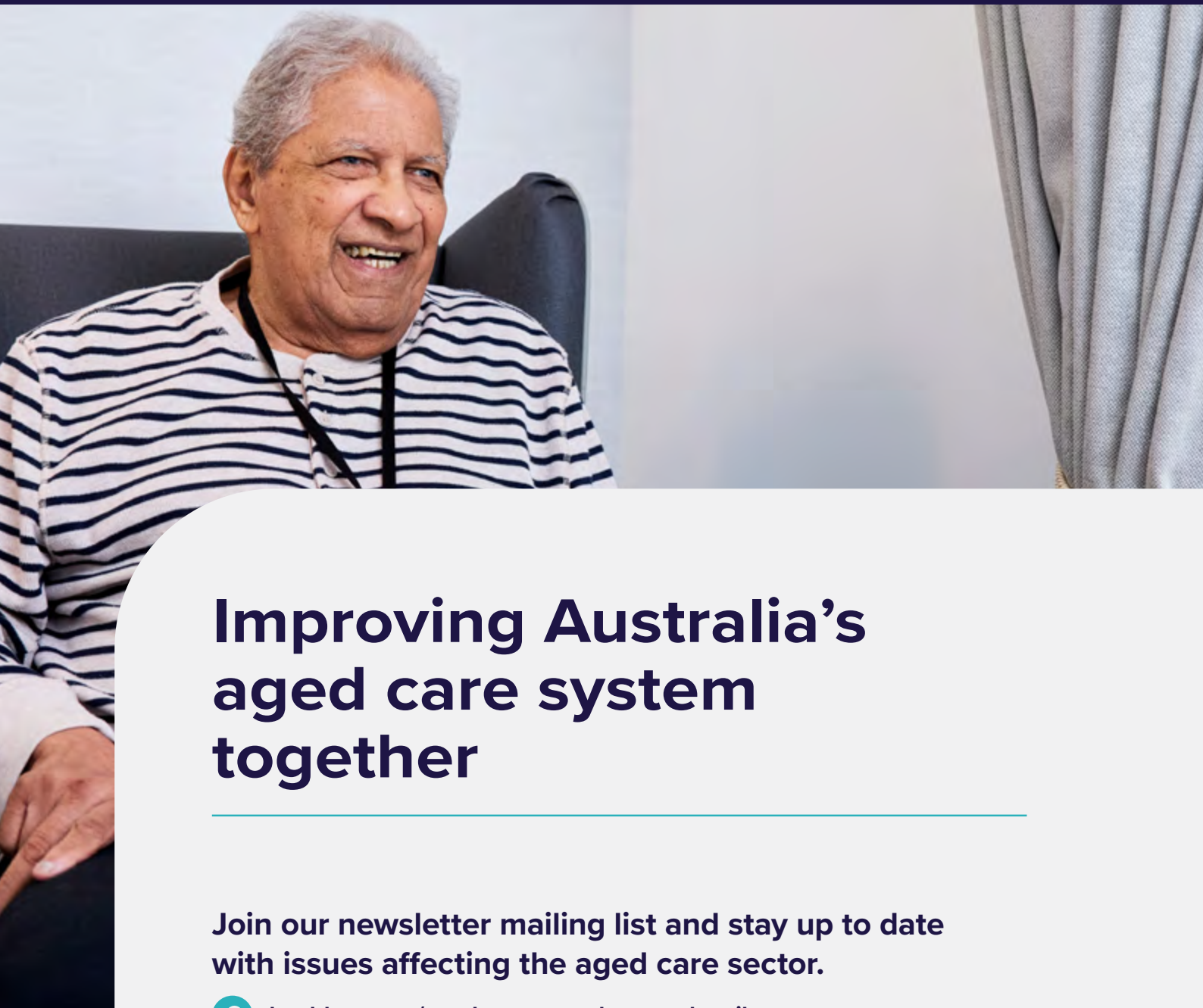
With offices in every Australian capital city, and 9 regional sites nationally, we're here to help.

- New South Wales: **Engagement.NSWACT@health.gov.au**
- Australian Capital Territory: **Engagement.NSWACT@health.gov.au**
- Queensland: **Engagement.QLD@health.gov.au**
- Northern Territory: **NTPlaces@health.gov.au**
- Victoria: **VIC.office@health.gov.au**
- Tasmania: **TAS.office@health.gov.au**
- Western Australia: **Engagement.WA@health.gov.au**
- South Australia: **Engagement.SA@health.gov.au**



health.gov.au/our-work/our-local-network

Notes



Improving Australia's aged care system together

Join our newsletter mailing list and stay up to date with issues affecting the aged care sector.



health.gov.au/aged-care-newsletter-subscribe

Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme

If someone you care for is lonely or socially isolated and would benefit from friendship and companionship, you can request a volunteer visitor through the Aged Care Volunteers Visitors Scheme. Visits are available to anyone who receives government-subsidised residential aged care or Support at Home, including care recipients approved or on the National Priority System.



health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-volunteer-visitors-scheme-acvvs/request