



Australian Government
Department of Health and Aged Care



Reforming aged care in Australia

Let's change aged care together



agedcareengagement.health.gov.au

Changes to aged care

The Australian Government is making changes to the aged care system in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (Royal Commission).

These changes – known as the **aged care reforms** – will improve aged care in Australia for all.

To find out more and have your say about the aged care reforms, visit:

 agedcareengagement.health.gov.au/get-involved



A message from the Hon Anika Wells MP

Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Sport



March 1, 2023 marks two years since the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's final report was tabled in Parliament, a critical milestone in the journey to restoring dignity to older people in Australia.

This important milestone gives us the opportunity to reflect on what has happened since, and to look ahead to what needs to change.

In 2022, we implemented major changes to reform the aged care system:

We introduced Star Ratings for residential aged care, extended the Serious Incident Response Scheme to home care and improved transparency and accountability around home care pricing and fees.

We also supported a wage increase for aged care workers, capped home care package fees, legislated 24/7 nurses and more care minutes in residential aged care homes, and enabled a new funding model for residential aged care to better match the costs of delivering care.

While we have achieved a lot of positive change in less than a year in Government, there is still much to be done.

We have critical reforms to tackle over the next 12 months as we continue responding to the Royal Commission's recommendations.

This is why it's so important we talk to as many people as we can to make sure our aged care system meets their current and future needs.

I have been visiting residential aged care homes and meeting with older people and their families and carers, as well as aged care workers and aged care providers, to hear what they think about aged care.

Older people, along with their families and carers, are at the heart of these changes and I want to assure you: we are listening.

We are ambitious for aged care and I strongly encourage everyone to have their say.

Together we can make positive, lasting changes to aged care that deliver safety, dignity and respect for older people.

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 was established as part of the aged care reforms.

The Council helps shape the aged care system by informing older people about the aged care reforms and provides advice to the Government about aged care reforms and ageing well.

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

Find out more and contact the Council of Elders:



health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/aged-care-council-of-elders



From left to right: Ms Gwenda Darling, Ms Val Fell, OAM, and Ms Gillian Groom, AO, 3 members of the Council of Elders, attend the 2023 Senior Australian of the Year Lunch in Canberra.

Aged care reforms in action

By reading through the pages in this booklet, you can learn more about the aged care reforms and get an idea of how they might work in real life.

The people and organisations depicted in these scenarios are not real. We have created these scenarios to show examples of how the reforms may improve individual experiences of aged care.

Some of the reforms in the scenarios are currently still in the planning stage and yet to start. We have indicated throughout when these reforms will take place.



Helen's story



Helen is an 86-year-old woman living with dementia. For many years Helen's son Brian has looked after her care arrangements. Brian uses the National Dementia Support Program. It provides him with information, courses, videos and newsletters that help him better understand his mum's journey.

As Helen's needs increase and she starts losing weight, she and Brian decide she could soon need a higher level of care. They decide Helen will move into a small aged care home down the road from Brian's place in Adelaide.

The onsite registered nurse Irene, working alongside aged care staff, provides regular care to Helen. She notes Helen needs extra support at mealtimes to encourage her to eat. The chefs and cooks at Helen's aged care home have taken part in the sector education and training from the Maggie Beer Foundation to further improve the quality of the food and overall nutrition for those who live there. Over time, Helen's weight stabilises, her health and wellbeing improve, and she seems more settled.

One night, Helen has a fall. The home is required to have a registered nurse present at all times, and that night Irene is on duty. She does a full clinical assessment and notices that Helen has hurt her arm. Irene assesses Helen and finds the injury isn't serious. She cares for her until a general practitioner (GP) can visit the aged care home the next morning. Thanks to Irene, Helen is comfortable and safe and has avoided needing to go to hospital.

The following month, Brian – as Helen's chosen representative – opens a copy of her monthly care statement, which Helen's aged care home is now required to send out. It outlines the care Helen receives and any big changes or events from the past month. Previous statements detailed his mum's weight loss, and the progress of her dementia. This month, he reads about her fall. Although Irene had phoned him to let him know what happened at the time, it's good to see it has been recorded.



'Mum's dementia makes it hard for her to tell me what's been happening in the home. Monthly care statements are a great way for me stay up to date on her care.'

– Brian, Helen's son

Available now

National Dementia Support Program

The National Dementia Support Program aims to help people living with dementia and their carers and families understand more about dementia. It also aims to connect people living with dementia, their families and carers with services that support them to self-manage and live well with dementia for as long as possible. Find out more:



health.gov.au/our-work/national-dementia-support-program-ndsp

Early support and local services for people living with dementia

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) have developed local dementia care pathways to support GPs to connect people living with dementia to the local support they need. Dementia-specific pathways are helping health professionals to better support patients at all stages of dementia diagnosis and care.

Available from July 2023

Putting more nurses into aged care homes

More nurses in residential aged care homes means more clinical care for residents. From July 2023, we'll have a registered nurse on site and on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. From 1 October 2023, all aged care homes will have to meet their individual care requirements based on a sector average target of 200 minutes of care per resident per day, including an average of 40 minutes of care from a registered nurse. From 1 October 2024, the sector average requirements will increase to 215 minutes of care per resident per day including an average of 44 minutes of care from a registered nurse.

Pilot program underway in 2023

Monthly Care Statements

Residential aged care providers will be required to provide a Monthly Care Statement to all residents or their representatives. This will outline the care the resident received, as well as any significant changes or events that occurred during the previous month. These statements are not financial in nature and are intended to supplement, not replace, existing communication practices.

Eleni's story



Like most of her friends, 79-year-old Eleni loves her independence and wants to keep living in her Melbourne home for as long as she can. She receives a Home Care Package that provides her with the help she needs around the house. She also gets assistance to put on her pressure socks, which her doctor has recommended to better manage her lymphoedema.

The only trouble is that Eleni's personal care workers sometimes don't show up as scheduled, making her late for her social club activities. Doing these activities is important to Eleni, as they help her keep her independence. Eleni's worried that if she makes a fuss, it could get awkward with her home care provider. But if she doesn't speak up, then she's not getting the help she needs.

Eleni speaks English well, but is more confident when speaking Greek. She uses the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) to talk to her provider.

Eleni also knows that if she wants to find a provider more suited to her needs, she can switch to another provider at any time, and this will not affect the money in her Home Care Package. That's because there are now no exit fees and there's a cap on administration fees.



'I want changes the Government is making to work, so people like me can get the support we need to keep living at home.'

Available now

Home Care Packages pricing changes

We have taken 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 are capped at 20 per cent and 15 per cent of the respective package levels.

We have banned exit fees, improving provider choice for care recipients, while also stopping providers from charging separate brokerage and subcontracting fees in the program. More than 37,000 older people will no longer be charged for changing providers or exiting the program.

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)

If you are receiving care, you can get immediate phone interpreting through TIS National for the cost of a local call. Call 131 450, 24 hours a day, every day of the year or to book an interpreter, visit:

 tisnational.gov.au

Upcoming

Reforming in-home aged care to prioritise independence

In-home aged care supports about 1 million older people in Australia. These services range from transport and house cleaning to clinical care, such as nursing and allied health. We are delivering a reformed in-home aged care program that is based on what we've heard from people who will use and deliver the services.

A new approach to regulating aged care

A new model for regulating aged care is being developed to support the new Aged Care Act and the reforms to in-home aged care. The model will place older people front and centre of the regulatory design. It will enhance the protections of older people and uphold their rights.

Strengthening the Aged Care Quality Standards

A key feature of the new regulatory model will be a new set of Aged Care Quality Standards which will improve the focus on diversity, dementia, governance, clinical care and a dedicated standard for food and nutrition.

Lionel's story



Lionel is a proud First Nations Elder. He loves getting out On Country where his people have lived for many thousands of years. He's in his 50s and can't imagine living anywhere else. But he's worried because these days he needs a lot more help around the house. As far as he knows, there's no aged care provider or services in his community. The nearest aged care home is a couple of hours drive away in Toowoomba, far from his grandchildren, his community and his Country.

The Aboriginal medical service in Lionel's community makes an appointment for him to see Chris, a Trusted Indigenous Facilitator the Government has funded to join their team.

A fellow First Nations person, Chris relates to Lionel's strong connection to his Country and culture. He arranges to go with Lionel to meet with an Indigenous aged care assessment team.

The assessment confirms Lionel is eligible for entry level aged care services. His facilitator Chris knows about all the specialist services Lionel is entitled to receive, and who is best to provide them.

Chris sets Lionel up with a provider who arranges a personal support worker, Justin, one of Lionel's own mob.

Justin is a qualified carer, having recently completed a Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing). He helps keep Lionel's house tidy, does his laundry and makes his lunch.

Now that Lionel's getting the support he needs, it's a weight off his mind. His family and community are relieved that one of their valued Elders will be staying close.

'I was worried about having to move to the city when I got old. My Trusted Indigenous Facilitator understood how much it means to me to stay On Country.'

Available now

More skilled workers providing appropriate care

The Government is boosting new and existing aged care worker skills. There are more opportunities for TAFE training, such as the Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing), university places, scholarships and online training programs.

Available from mid-2023

Trusted Indigenous Facilitators

We are developing a workforce of Trusted Indigenous Facilitators to help First Nations Elders, their families and carers to access aged care services that meet their physical and cultural needs. This will happen as a phased approach, beginning in the middle of 2023, with full establishment by the first half of 2025.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care assessment workforce

We are establishing a dedicated assessment pathway for First Nations Elders to access aged care.



Derek's story



Derek is 82. He's lived alone in a cottage on his dairy farm south of Perth in Western Australia since his wife June died 2 years ago.

After June's death, Derek knew he needed help, so he contacted My Aged Care. He phoned Services Australia and made an appointment at their office in Busselton to speak to an Aged Care Specialist Officer.

Derek was referred to an assessment organisation and found eligible for aged care. His home support worker now comes twice a week to drive him into town for shopping and to clean his bathroom.

These days Derek's son Ross runs the farm and lives in the main house. Ross is busy, having bought the next-door property to expand his business. Sometimes Derek feels lonely. He misses June and his old busy life running the farm.

The Aged Care Specialist Officer also tells Derek about the Community Visitors Scheme, set up to help connect isolated people with their communities. The local organisation running the scheme connects him with John, a 60-year-old local farming contractor who lives nearby and visits Derek about once a week. They read the newspaper together and talk about the weather and cattle prices.

'John's a good bloke and makes a good cup of tea. Since he's been popping in, I've felt like I've got a mate to talk to again.'

Available now

Aged Care Specialist Officers

Aged Care Specialist Officers provide My Aged Care face-to-face services. They can help with your aged care matters. You can book a free appointment with an Aged Care Specialist Officer at Services Australia service centres in 80 locations across Australia. Find out more:

 servicesaustralia.gov.au/aged-care-specialist-officer-my-aged-care-face-to-face-services

Community Visitors Scheme

The Community Visitors Scheme connects volunteers with someone in their neighbourhood who is receiving aged care services and feeling isolated or lonely. Volunteers come from all different backgrounds and from all over Australia. Visits are available to anyone receiving government-subsidised aged care services. To be a volunteer or connect with an older person in your area, find out more at:

 health.gov.au/cvs



Wei-Ling and Victor's story



Wei-Ling and Victor are both in their 70s. They're active members of their community in a bustling regional New South Wales town where they've lived since migrating from Singapore in the 1980s. They've always been good at planning ahead and are starting to gather information early so they can enjoy a quality lifestyle as they grow older.

They find lots of useful information on the My Aged Care website which tells them about government-funded aged care services.

Wei-Ling and Victor use the 'Find a provider' tool on the My Aged Care website and discover the new Star Ratings allow them to compare the quality of the 3 aged care homes in their town. The ratings incorporate the homes' compliance against the aged care standards, the results of interviews with some of the residents, as well as results against key quality measures and the amount of care provided by staff.

Two of the homes in their town have 3 stars, and one has 4. They see that each scored 3 stars for compliance, staffing minutes and quality measures. But one scored 4 stars for residents' experience.

Wei-Ling and Victor have the right information available to them and they know they'll be able to choose the aged care home that best suits them.



'We want to start planning for the next phase of our lives. The Star Ratings system lets us check whether the providers in our town are up to scratch.'

Available now

Star Ratings for aged care homes

Star Ratings for aged care homes are now available through the 'Find a provider' tool on the My Aged Care website. Star Ratings allows you to compare the quality of aged care homes. Residential aged care homes receive an overall Star Rating as well as ratings against 4 sub-categories: compliance, residents' experience, staffing and quality measures. Find out more:

 myagedcare.gov.au/quality-aged-care

Improving quality of food and nutrition

We are improving the quality of food and nutrition in residential aged care homes. Good nutrition contributes to a reduction in falls, fewer infections and illnesses, and improved wellbeing and quality of life. Just some of the measures underway to enhance food and nutrition in aged care include:

- strengthening accountability by developing a dedicated food and nutrition quality standard
- strengthening reporting requirements by mandating food expenditure reporting through the Quarterly Financial Report
- strengthening workforce capability by working with the Maggie Beer Foundation to provide sector education and training for aged care chefs and cooks
- continuing the funding uplift provided by the \$10 Basic Daily Fee supplement by rolling it into ongoing funding arrangements.

Available from April 2023

Additional quality indicators

Quality indicators measure important areas of care affecting older people's health and wellbeing. From April 2023, we will introduce 6 additional quality indicators in residential aged care: activities of daily living, incontinence care, hospitalisation, workforce, consumer experience and quality of life.

William and Ron's story



William, 80, and Ron, 75, are an out-and-proud gay couple. A lot has changed in their 35 years together. The wider community is much more welcoming than when they first met. And it was a big milestone moment when they tied the knot 3 years ago in front of friends and family in Canberra.

They're ready to grow old together but want to make sure personal support workers accept who they are.

Ron starts looking into providers to come to their apartment and help with cleaning and laundry. Using the 'Find a provider' tool on the My Aged Care website, he soon spots a few services that look welcoming and inclusive.

Although all aged care providers must provide quality care to all people, the Government now verifies services that claim to offer specialised care for LGBTI or other groups of people from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

William knows when they're ready to look at aged care homes, they'll be looking at those with a Specialisation Verification tick for LGBTI services.

'The verification system gives us peace of mind that carers coming to our house will accept us for who we are.'

Available now

Culturally safe aged care

We have made it easier for older people with diverse needs, backgrounds and lived experiences to access more reliable information about their care providers on the My Aged Care website. Some providers tailor their services, staff and organisation to meet the needs of specific groups. These providers can apply to have their specialised services independently verified against the My Aged Care Provider Specialisation Verification Framework. Find out more:



myagedcare.gov.au/understanding-specialisations-and-verification



Access aged care information and referrals for assessment and services

Do you need some help around the house or are you 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.

 Phone: **1800 200 422**

For translating and interpreting services (TIS National), call 131 450 and ask for 1800 200 422.

To use the National Relay Service, visit nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs to choose your preferred access point on their website, or call the NRS Helpdesk on 1800 555 660.

 Online: **myagedcare.gov.au**

 In person: to make an appointment at one of the 80 Services Australia service centres nationally, call **1800 227 475** (Monday–Friday, 8am to 5pm).

Have your say

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

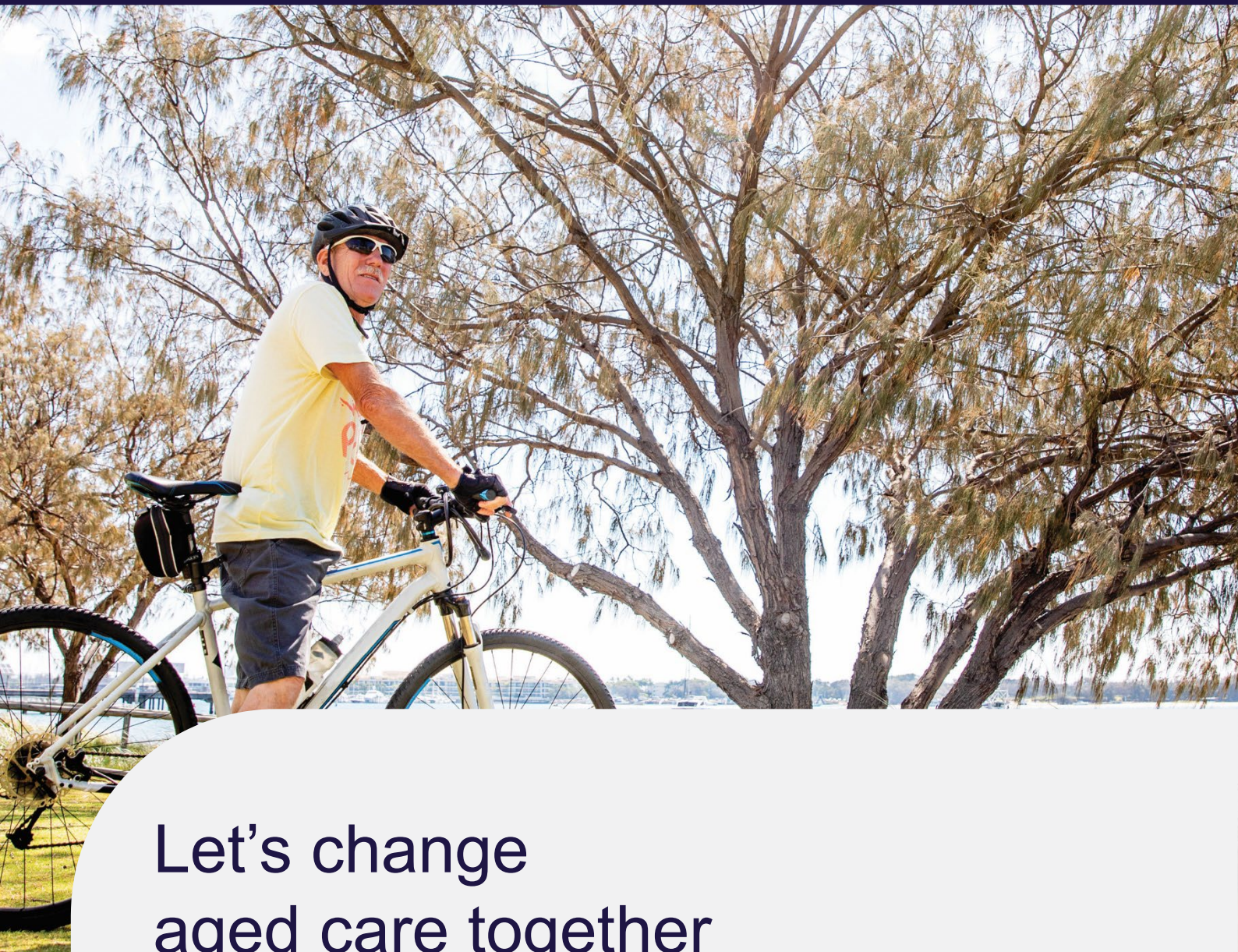
There are plenty of opportunities for you to have your say about the changes to aged care.

- Register to be kept up to date on consultation opportunities and outcomes through the Aged Care Engagement Hub.
- Sign up to receive our monthly newsletter for older people – *EngAged*.
- Meet with us in-person at one of the many upcoming events that we're attending around Australia.



Visit agedcareengagement.health.gov.au/get-involved





Let's change aged care together

**We invite everyone to continue to have their say
about the aged care reforms.**



Visit agedcareengagement.health.gov.au



Phone **1800 318 209**
(Aged care reform free-call phone line)

For translating and interpreting services (TIS National), call 131 450 and ask for 1800 318 209.

To use the National Relay Service, visit nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs to choose your preferred access point on their website, or call the NRS Helpdesk on 1800 555 660.