



Australian Government

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Higher Everyday Living Fees

Aged Care Quality and Safety
Commission sector webinar

Tuesday 11 August 2026





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Acknowledgement of Country

Artwork by Dreamtime Creative



Agenda

- **Introduction, Acknowledgement of Country, Housekeeping**
- **Julia Atkinson, Assistant Secretary, Contributions and Accommodations Reform Branch, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing**
- **Pat Sparrow, Chief Executive Officer, COTA Australia**
- **Gary Rake, Deputy Commissioner Regulatory Operations, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**
- **Q&A**





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Introduction: Residential Care Service List and HELF

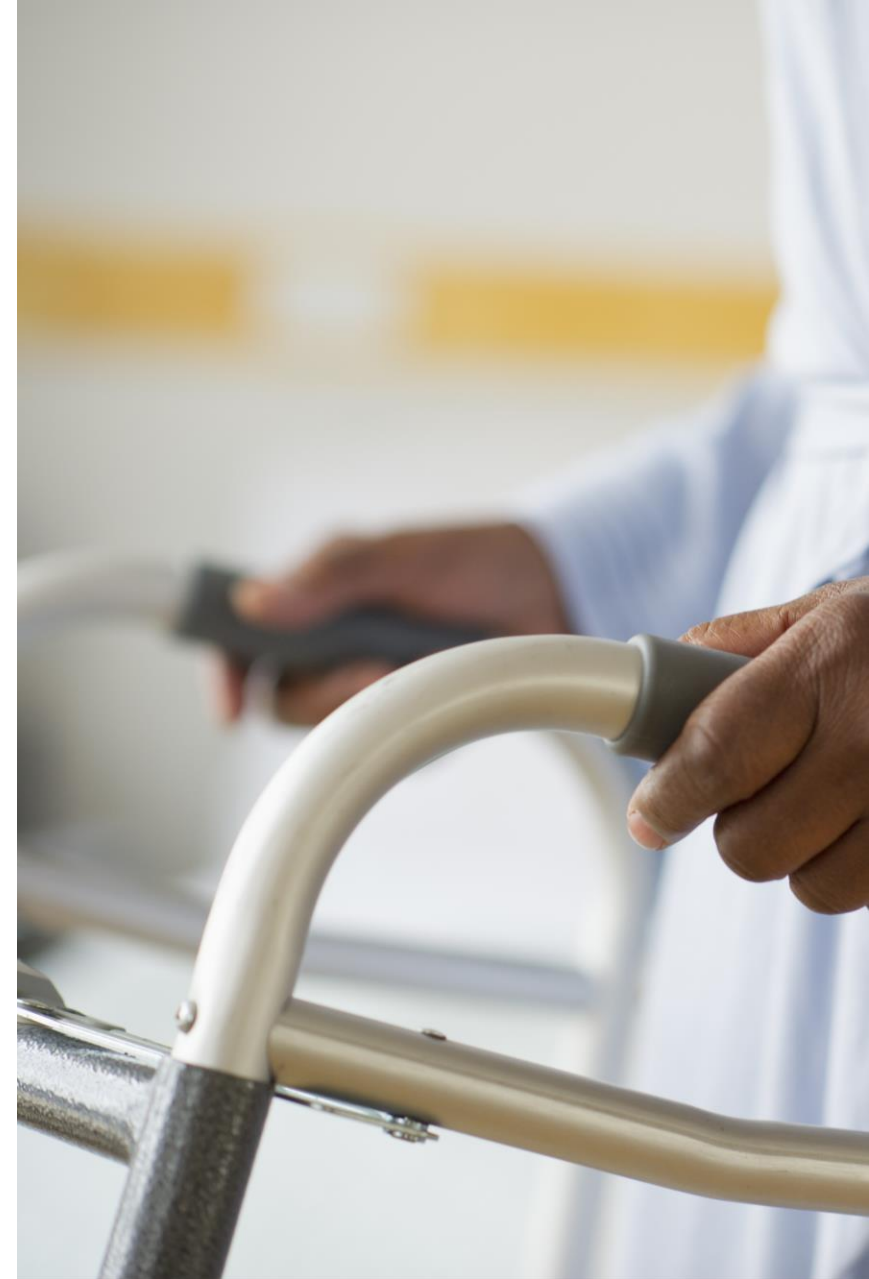
Julia Atkinson
Assistant Secretary

Contributions and Accommodation Reform Branch
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing



Residential Care Service List

- All essential care and services are outlined in the Service List
- Must be provided in accordance with:
 - Aged Care Quality Standards, and
 - Statement of Rights
- Homes cannot charge extra for these services



Higher Everyday Living Fee (HELF)

- Increased protections, more choice and better control.
- HELF is optional.
- HELF services must be a higher standard than the services required in the Service List
- Two types of agreements:
 - Standing agreements
 - Ad-hoc agreements
- Prices for HELF services are set by the provider.



HELF consumer protections

- Cannot be signed prior to entering care or be used as a condition of entry.
- 28-day cooling off period.
- Can be cancelled at any time with reasonable notice.
- Reviewed every 12 months.
- Price increases in line with annual CPI only.



Transition

- HELF replaces Extra and Additional Service arrangements from 31 Oct 2026.
- Residents who decline to transfer to HELF agreements must still receive the standard of care required by the Service List.





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Pat Sparrow
Chief Executive Officer
COTA Australia





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Gary Rake
Deputy Commissioner, Regulatory Operations
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission





HELF obligations

What providers need to remember

Providers can't:

- use HELF as a condition for entry into an aged care home
- charge HELF for services required in the Residential Aged Care Service List
- remove services that were previously available and were later incorporated into HELF agreements
- charge HELF for services residents can't use

Providers must ensure:

- meals meet residents' nutritional needs, goals and preferences as well as meeting all obligations under the Quality Standards
- HELF agreements are agreed upon with residents in a way that supports choice.
- HELF agreements are transparent about services, pricing and bundling.



The way forward

Key areas where the Commission will exercise regulatory powers

We will continue to take a proportionate, risk-based approach, using the right tools for the right risk. Our areas of focus for achieving compliance include:

- **Food, nutrition and dining:** Are you meeting your obligations against the Quality Standards?
- **HELF agreements:** Have you ensured choice and transparency, clear communication and agreement with residents about pricing and bundling arrangements?
- **Incorrectly charging HELF:** Are you charging residents for:
 - services in the Residential Care Service List
 - services they cannot access, use or reasonably derive benefit from?



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HELF Resources



[Higher Everyday Living Fee \(HELF\) fact sheet](#)

Information on HELF and the transition from previous arrangements for both providers and consumers.

[Residential Care Service List and higher everyday living fee – Guidance for providers](#)

A guide to providers on the policy intent of the Residential Care Service List and HELF.

[Understanding fees for aged care homes fact sheets](#)

Providers can use these fact sheets to explain the fees a resident may be asked to pay for permanent residential care (under different fee arrangements) and for residential respite care.

[Higher everyday living fee in residential care homes](#)

Information on HELF services that residential care homes may offer from 1 November 2025.