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Media Release

Commission targets key risks for 2026-27 to strengthen aged care outcomes

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will focus on four sector risk priorities in 2026–27, targeting areas where action can make the greatest difference to the safety, wellbeing and rights of older Australians.

Speaking at a Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) *Shaping the future of Aged Care* event today in Melbourne, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner Liz Hefren-Webb said the priorities focus on areas where the Commission believes stronger prevention, earlier detection and more effective responses can deliver the greatest improvements for older people.

The Commission's priorities for 2026-27 are:

- aged care rights in practice
- sexual safety and sexual rights
- de-escalating changed behaviours
- culturally safe care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people delivered by mainstream providers.

"Every older person deserves to feel safe, respected and heard, whether they're receiving care in their own home, in the community or in residential care," the Commissioner said.

"These priorities are about strengthening protections, upholding rights and helping providers deliver the quality-of-care older people expect and deserve.

"We are focused on reducing harm and improving care so older people can live with dignity, choice and confidence."

The priorities were identified through analysis of regulatory data, evidence, and sector intelligence, with a focus on areas where the risks of harm are greatest for older people.

While the Commission will continue to oversee providers' compliance with all obligations under the Aged Care Act, the sector risk priorities identify areas that will receive additional regulatory attention, guidance, engagement, and sector support throughout 2026-27.

The Commissioner said the priorities reinforce the Commission's risk-based and proportionate approach to regulation and provide an opportunity for a broader sector conversation about rights.

"A strong focus on sector-wide risks helps identify patterns of harm early, support timely intervention, and drive coordinated action to improve outcomes for older people.

By strengthening practices across the sector, the Commission will help build a safer, more rights-based aged care sector, with success measured by experiences for older people, the Commissioner said.

"Ultimately, success will be measured by whether older people experience safer care, greater choice and stronger protection of their rights."

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Questions & Answers

Why were these priorities chosen?

The priorities focus on areas where stronger prevention, detection and response can have the greatest impact on the safety, wellbeing, dignity and rights of older people. They were selected based on their impact on older people, alignment with Commission priorities, significance for providers and workers, and where regulatory intervention is most likely to improve outcomes.

Does this mean these are the only issues the Commission will focus on?

No. The Commission will continue to oversee providers' compliance with all obligations under the Aged Care Act. The sector risk priorities identify areas that will receive additional regulatory attention, guidance, engagement and sector support.

What do the priorities mean for providers?

Providers should consider how these priority areas apply to their services and use them as a focus for self-reflection, risk management and continuous improvement activities. The priorities provide a clear indication of areas where the Commission expects providers to strengthen practice and outcomes for older people.

Will the Commission increase enforcement activity in these areas?

The Commission's approach remains proportionate, risk-based and outcomes-focused. The priorities will inform education, engagement, monitoring and regulatory activities, with enforcement action taken where there are significant or unmanaged risks to older people.

How do the priorities support aged care reform?

The priorities support the transition to the new Aged Care Act by focusing attention on issues that are central to a rights-based aged care system, including safety, dignity, choice, cultural safety and quality care outcomes.

How will the Commission support providers?

The Commission will deliver targeted guidance, engagement and learning opportunities, alongside regulatory activities, to help providers understand expectations and strengthen outcomes for older people.

About the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is the regulator of aged care services in Australia, responsible for protecting and enhancing the safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life of people receiving aged care.

More information about the Commission is available at: [**www.agedcarequality.gov.au**](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au).