

# National Aged Care Provider Conference 2025

## Navigating the change: Rights and regulation

### The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's 2025 National Aged Care Provider Conference was held at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre on 29–30 July 2025.

Nearly 3,000 sector representatives joined in person or online for 2 days of practical insights, policy updates and constructive discussions to help providers prepare for the new rights-based *Aged Care Act 2024*.

This document provides a high-level summary of the key themes over the course of 7 plenary and 2 parallel sessions, highlighting how the sector can work together to implement the new Aged Care Act and deliver its intended outcomes.



**13**

Sessions



**76**

Presenters



**12**

Panel discussions

## Key themes

### 1. Getting ready for the new Act

- Together, we explored expectations, challenges and pathways to rights-based, safe quality aged care under the new Aged Care Act.
- We agreed on the importance of making good use of the brief deferral of the new Act to 1 November to have the systems, processes and practices in place to meet new obligations and responsibilities.

**“The 1st of November does not mark the end of aged care reform, but rather the beginning of transformative improvements to aged care in Australia.”**

**The Hon Sam Rae MP, Minister for Aged Care and Seniors**

**“Will you as providers open the door and give us our voice? Let’s make space for us to make our decisions as best we can – that does take time, but the outcome is so much better.”**

**Anne Burgess AM, Chair, Aged Care Council of Elders**

- We recognised the diversity of the sector and the particular challenges faced by smaller providers in maintaining service delivery while preparing for the new Act and we reaffirmed our commitment to providing support.
- We discussed the opportunity for greater sector-wide collaboration and adoption of community of practice approaches to boost knowledge sharing and learnings.
- Most attendees surveyed (76%) felt more confident in understanding and navigating the new Aged Care Act having attended the conference.

### 2. Delivering rights-based care

- We heard from the Council of Elders, OPAN, COTA and members of our [Consumers and Families Panel](#) on what rights-based care means to and for older people.
- We must listen to and empower older people to make decisions about their care, keeping culture and identity in clear view, being open when things go wrong and taking actions to restore trust.
- The Statement of Principles prioritises the rights, dignity, safety, wellbeing, autonomy and self-determination of older people. These principles must be reflected in action and embedded in culture and practice – by providers, by workers and by us as the regulator.
- Everyone benefits when the rights and choices of older people are put at the centre of their care.
- We discussed the balance of upholding older people’s rights and duty of care, including dignity of risk.
- Delivering culturally appropriate and trauma-informed care was stressed as essential, going well beyond training to embedding capability in everyday practice.

### In person attendee providers



Residential care	355
Home services	250
Both residential care and home services	158
CHSP*	106
Residential, home services and CHSP, or other	230

### Virtual attendee providers



Residential care	567
Home services	556
Both residential care and home services	315
CHSP*	249
Residential, home services and CHSP, or other	140

**76%**

**of post-conference survey respondents felt more confident navigating the new Act having attended the conference**

## Exhibitors

Aged Care Industry Association (ACIA)  
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission  
Ageing Australia  
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)  
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF)  
COTA (Council on the Ageing) Australia  
Dementia Australia  
Department of Health, Disability and Ageing  
LGBTQI+ Health Australia  
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council (NATSIAAC)  
Office of the Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner  
Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)  
Palliative Care Australia



**“The conference was informative, interactive and engaging. One of the best ones I have been to in a long time.”**

Attendee

### 3. Rights-based regulation

- We discussed our Regulatory Strategy which has been updated to align with the new rights-based Act, and we encouraged sector feedback to the upcoming consultation to ensure it is clear and useful.
- Providers making genuine efforts to meet the requirements of the new Act will find us to be a constructive partner. The Commissioner emphasised her commitment to supporting the sector adjust to the changes.
- Under the new Act, the Commission has a stronger set of regulatory tools from which to choose how we respond, with the aim of being risk-based and proportionate rather than one-size-fits-all.
- The new Act reinforces expectations around worker conduct and highlights the important role workers play in caring for older people. We discussed the challenges in recruitment, retention and supporting aged care workforce and providers shared innovative approaches in these areas.

**“It was nice to hear that the Commission is and will be available to be contacted by providers as we navigate the many challenges we will face from now till November and beyond.”**

Attendee

### 4. Governance is key

- Parallel sessions on clinical, workforce and organisational [governance](#) addressed the changing obligations for governing bodies.
- We acknowledged the challenges in building board capacity, particularly for volunteer-run, rural and remote providers.

- Governance supports the systems and leadership necessary for safe, quality aged care. It connects policies, culture, monitoring and improving the experiences of older people. This includes supporting workers with the right training, supervision and development.
- Effective governance is key to identifying, understanding and managing risk. It creates an environment where people feel safe, respected and able to make decisions, while staff have the guidance and support to manage risks effectively.

**“We are all now engaged in strengthening a sector that places older people’s rights, safety and wellbeing at its centre. We are all committed to service delivery that is not only safe and high quality, but respectful, inclusive and empowering.”**

Liz Hefren-Webb, Commissioner

### 5. Better complaints handling

- A strengthened complaints function, including an independent [Complaints Commissioner](#), will better support people to feel safe to have their concerns heard and resolved. Complaints are key to realising a rights-based aged care experience.
- Complaints should be easy to make, fair, and give older people a real say in the outcome with open disclosure a key tool to restore trust and confidence.
- Complaints also act as intelligence, showing what matters most to older people and helping providers build genuine partnerships that put rights at the centre.
- Clearer guidance is needed to support workers on whistleblower protections and on strategies to support workers facing abuse or unrealistic demands.

**“Great to learn more about the way other providers have approached reform implementation, and I feel better prepared following the event.”**

Attendee

### 6. Registration in practice

- This plenary session provided a practical run-through on how the new [registration and registration renewal](#) processes will work from a provider’s point of view.
- Providers delivering services in categories 4, 5 and 6 will need to show they meet the strengthened Quality Standards through an audit. These audits are announced in advance and involve more engagement with governing bodies and senior leaders.
- We will advise providers early on about possible findings of non-conformance and give them the chance to fix issues before final decisions are made.
- Where a provider fully meets the standards, they may have the opportunity to demonstrate excellence and receive an exceeding rating.

**“It has been wonderful to connect in this way, meet others, listen to experiences and understand the sector is experiencing very similar concerns and successes.”**

Attendee

### 7. Feedback for improvement

- Providers noted improvements in the quality of guidance materials but want more practical real-world solutions and case studies.
- Providers also want greater clarity on our regulatory approach, with more tailored support, particularly for smaller providers and for Support at Home providers.
- Consistency across all arms of the Commission is key to building trust and confidence. This will encourage providers to be confident in approaching us for advice and guidance without fear of a punitive response.
- We acknowledged there’s a lot of information for providers to get across. We’re focused on making sure our materials are as helpful and accessible as possible and encouraged your ongoing feedback for our own continuous improvement.



**View the session recordings, highlights video and photo gallery**

