



Australian Government
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Rights-based complaints handling under the new Aged Care Act

Commission webinar

Date: 17 February 2026





Australian Government

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Acknowledgement of Country

Artwork by Dreamtime Creative





Speakers

Host

Liz Hefren-Webb, Commissioner, Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission (ACQSC)

Panel

- Treasure Jennings, Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, ACQSC
- David Pezzanite, Assistant Commissioner, Intake & Complaints, ACQSC
- Samantha Edwards, Director Policy, Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)
- David Wright-Howie, Senior Policy Officer, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia



Overview

- 1 Meet the Complaints Commissioner
- 2 Rights-based approach to complaints handling
- 3 What's changed under the new legislation
- 4 Best practice complaints handling
- 5 What older people expect
- 6 Q&A



We welcome your engagement,
questions and feedback



Australian Government
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Treasure Jennings

Aged Care Complaints Commissioner





Aged Care Complaints Commissioner

Functions:

- **uphold the rights of older people and resolve their complaints or concerns** with meaningful, restorative outcomes
- deal with **complaints and feedback** about **providers and workers**
- **help older people** and their supporters **to make complaints & give feedback**
- promote **best-practice complaints handling**

Observations:

- significant **increase in the number of complaints** – not necessarily a bad thing!
- **Statement of Rights:** an individual has a right to:
 - **open communication and support**
 - make complaints using an **accessible mechanism, without fear of reprisal**
 - have the individual's complaints **dealt with fairly and promptly**

Priorities:

- **good processes and practices**
- providing **insights to providers** on **system issues**
- how best to use our powers to ensure where a significant issue exists, the **provider responds in an appropriate way**, and actions expected by the Commission are undertaken by the provider
- **support providers** to handle complaints better



A rights-based approach:





The 4 A's of complaint handling

Acknowledge

Answer

Action

Apology



David Pezzanite

Assistant Commissioner
Intake and Complaints

Aged Care Quality and Safety
Commission



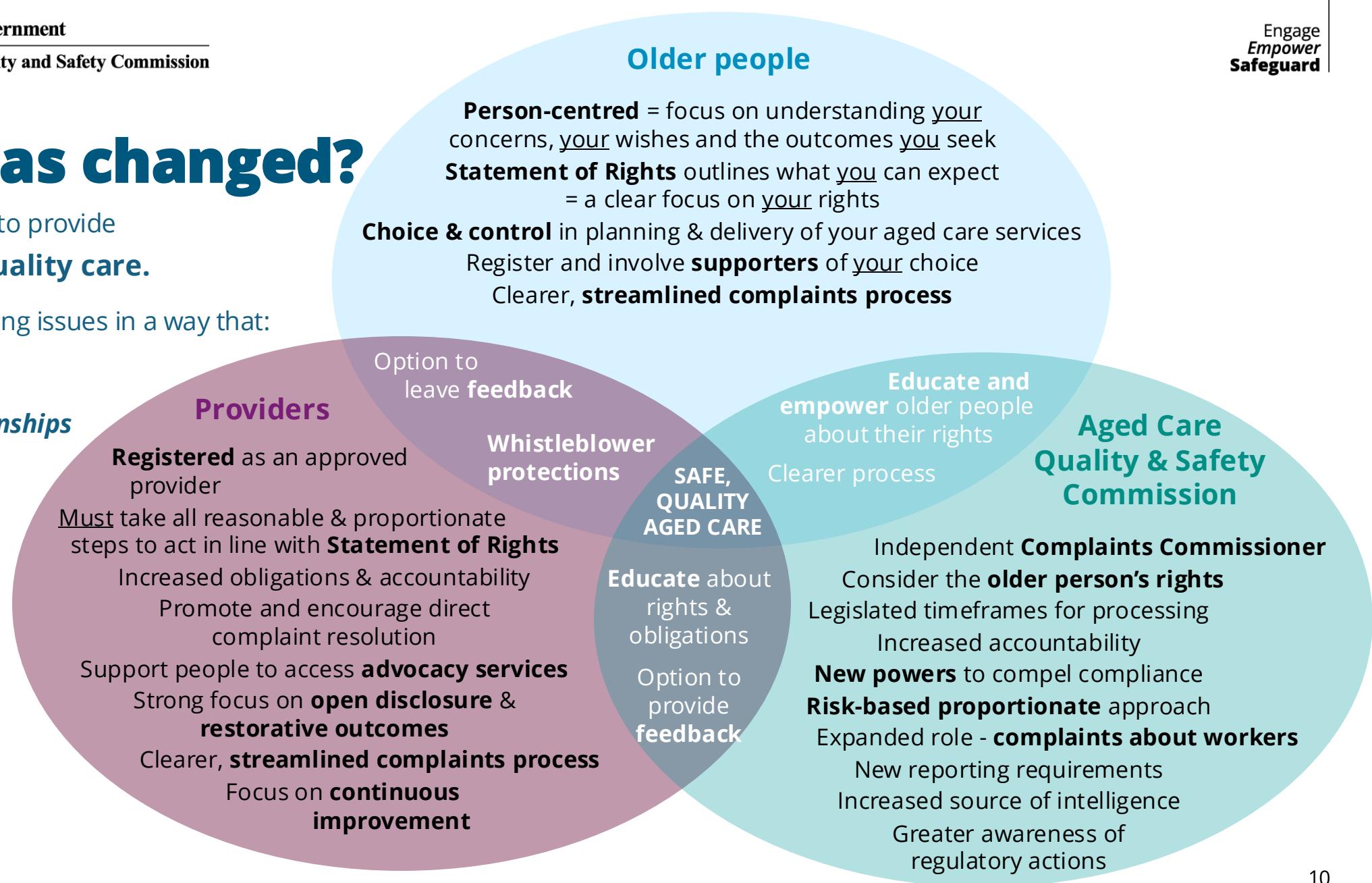


What has changed?

The central aim is to provide
safe, quality care.

This means resolving issues in a way that:

- **builds trust**
- **repairs relationships**
- **supports continuous improvement**
- **delivers lasting outcomes.**





Best practice

- **User-centred, simple to access & easy to use**
- **Support early resolution** of complaints
- **Integrated** within the corporate structure
- **Recorded in an electronic system**
- Supported by **clear process** guidance
- **Staff have the skills & support** they need
- **Quality assurance** & review processes
- **Adequately resourced**



Our partners

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

Samantha Edwards
Director Policy



open.org.au



1800 700 600

8am – 8pm Monday to Friday
10am – 4pm Saturdays



cota.org.au



1300 COTA AU (1300 2682 28)

9am – 5pm Monday to Friday

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia

David Wright-Howie
Senior Policy Officer



Liz Hefren-Webb

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner

Q&A Session





Helpful resources

Older people - [How to make a complaint or give feedback](#)

- Information about what to do if you have a concern, tips for making a complaint, your rights & protections.
- [Aged care for First Nations people](#)

Providers - [Good complaints practice for providers](#)

- Includes good complaints practice, provider obligations, tips for resolving complaints, and more.
- [Providers caring for First Nations people](#)

Aged care workers - [Complaints and feedback](#)

- Includes information about making a complaint or giving feedback, how to contact us, and your rights and protections.
- [Workers caring for First Nations people](#)

