



Australian Government

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Rights-based complaints handling under the new Aged Care Act

Commission webinar

Date: 17 February 2026





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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**



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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



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David Pezzanite

Assistant Commissioner
Intake and Complaints

Aged Care Quality and Safety
Commission



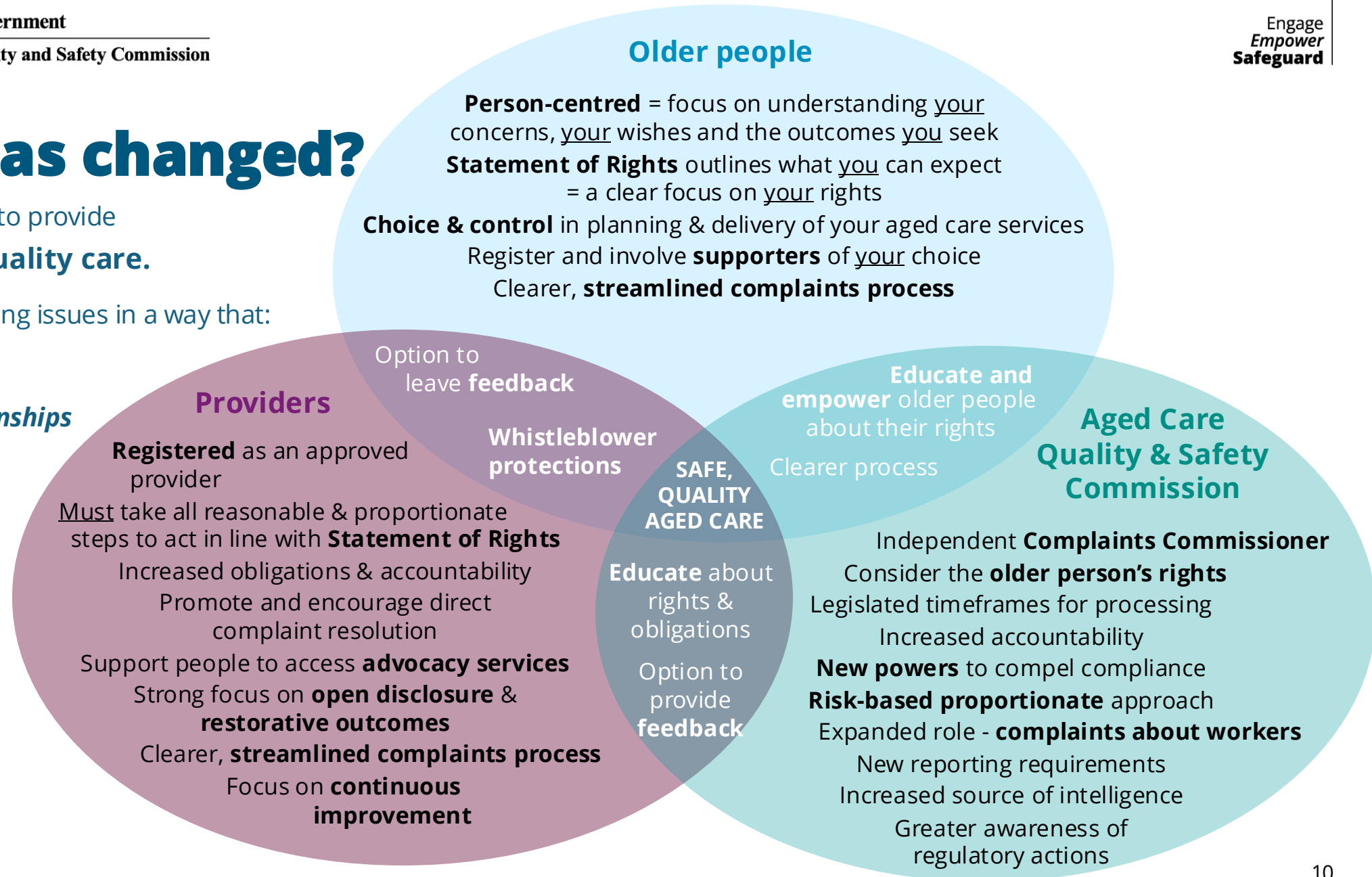


What has changed?

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.***





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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

Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia

David Wright-Howie

Senior Policy Officer



cota.org.au



1300 COTA AU (1300 2682 28)

9am – 5pm Monday to Friday



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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*](#)

