



Yarning about aged care and your rights

For First Nations older people, their family, friends and community and aged care providers.



Australian Government

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Engage
Empower
Safeguard

Please know there may be images of, or images that look like people who have passed into the Dreaming.



Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country and Islands throughout Australia and their connections to land, water and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

About the artwork

This artwork is called 'Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's Journey' by Chern'ee Sutton – proud Kalkadoon woman. It has been developed to share the journey of how the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission protects and improves the safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life of First Nations people receiving aged care services.



About this guide

If you're thinking about accessing aged care services for you or your family, this guide will help you talk to family, friends and community about aged care and your rights.

What's inside

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Yarning helps

Talking about aged care, your rights and speaking up if things aren't right is important.

You may have heard on the TV or radio that aged care is changing. New rules and standards are being introduced to make sure that older people's needs and rights come first. The standards help all older people get good quality, culturally appropriate and safe care. The standards make sure you and your family are supported to make choices about your care.

The changes are being made because a Royal Commission looked at the quality of aged care in Australia. It found that aged care for First Nations older people needs to be better.

This guide helps you talk about aged care, rights and what to do if your rights aren't being met.



Find out more about the **strengthened Quality Standards** on the [Commission website](#).

About aged care and your rights

Some mob don't know about different aged care options. Here is some information that will help you talk with family and community about aged care and your rights.

What is aged care?

If you need help with everyday tasks or looking after yourself and you are over 50, you may be able to get aged care.

There are different ways you can get aged care. You can get help in your **own home**, in the community, or some people might live in an aged care home.



What rights do you have?

You have the right to good and safe aged care that respects your **connection to family, community and Country**.

You have the right to **make choices about your care**. This can be how you want to spend your time, what you want help with and how you want to get that help.

You have the right to **speak up about your care**. This means saying what you want and speaking up if you're unhappy about your care.

When you speak up, you have the **right to be heard and respected** and still get good and safe aged care.

You have the right to have your **privacy respected** and say who your information can be shared with.



[Check out this **visual storyboard** that explains aged care and your rights.](#)



[You can learn more by checking out the **Statement of Rights info sheet**.](#)



Conversation starters to yarn about aged care

Here are some tips and conversation starters that can help you yarn with your family about aged care.

- **Talk about aged care early** – before someone may need help. You could start the conversation by saying ‘Did you know we can get help around our home when we’re 50.’
- **Understanding aged care options** – many people think aged care means moving into an aged care home. Most people get aged care at home. You can start a yarn with ‘I heard we can get aged care support at home – with things like shopping or help around the house.’
- **Involve respected people in community** – speak to Elders, community leaders or the health clinic about speaking with your family member about aged care and local support available.
- **Be ready with the facts** – there are lots of myths about aged care that can worry mob. Take a look at our [myth-busting information](#) at the end of this guide.
- **Find out about aged care support available** – you can visit myagedcare.gov.au to find out about aged care and local support available.



Culturally safe aged care in Darwin

The best thing you can do is try to learn from them [older First Nations people]. How their culture needs to be respected and upheld. And that's the biggest thing I've got in all the years I've been here. Learning all the time.'

Lyn has worked at Juninga in Darwin for 17 years as an aged care worker providing person centred care from the time each person wakes up to the time they go to sleep. She says that simple things like learning life stories and simple phrases in language makes people feel more comfortable.



[Watch the video about how Juninga practices culturally safe aged care.](#)

Telling people what's important to you

When you apply for aged care there is a lot to think about. Here are some things to talk about with your service provider, family, friends or community when planning your aged care.

When getting aged care support – at home or in an aged care home – you will have a **care plan**. The **care plan** tells the people who care for you what you want and need from your aged care.

It's important to speak up and say what you want or don't want when you make or change your **care plan** with your provider. **This is your right**.

You or your family member can ask to change the **care plan** whenever you want. Your aged care provider should yarn with you and your family about your plan at least once a year.

Talk to your family about what's important to have in your care plan, like:

- family who should be involved in yarning about your care
- things that make you feel comfortable – like being cared for by a man or woman
- things that are important to your culture – like music you like to listen to, painting or cooking or preparing traditional foods
- food and drinks you or your family like or don't like that help you feel connected to your culture
- traditional ceremonies or activities you want to keep being part of
- places on Country you like to visit or be reminded of – like photos of a special place or a jar of sand or dirt from home.

Remember it's your right to have culturally safe aged care that works for you and your family.



Speaking up if things aren't right

When you or your family member are getting aged care help, sometimes things may not be right. This is information to help you speak up if you're worried about your or a loved one's aged care.

Sometimes things may not be right with your aged care. These can be small or big things.

It's OK to speak up. It's not a problem to speak up about your aged care. It's good to try to fix problems before they get bigger. There are different ways to do this.



You can **talk to your aged care worker or provider**.

Let them know what the problem is and what you want done differently. Usually the problem can be solved quickly and with no fuss.



You can talk to your **family, friend or an advocate** if you're worried or unsure about your aged care. Talk to someone who can help you tell your story with or for you.

An advocate is someone who can help you in different ways. Some advocates work for an independent advocacy organisation, but they can also be a family member, a friend, or someone you trust to speak up for you. An advocate can help you understand things like your aged care services, your fees, or your rights.



Sometimes you may not feel comfortable talking to your worker or provider. Or maybe you tried to talk to them but the problem wasn't fixed.

If that happens, you can always talk to the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

- The Commission can give you advice about your choices. They can speak to your aged care provider if you want them to.
- They make sure older people and Elders are getting good, culturally safe and quality aged care.
- Talking to the Commission is **free and private**. You don't have to give your name if you don't want to. Call **1800 951 822** or email info@agedcarequality.gov.au



Check out this [visual storyboard](#) on how the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission can help make sure you're getting the right care for you and your family.



Tips for speaking up

Some older mob don't feel comfortable speaking up. This could be because they don't want to bother people, don't realise they have rights or are worried that speaking up will make things worse.

- Give examples of **the problems or worries** you are having. 'I don't like it when ...'
- Talk about **what you want instead**. For example 'Can we please put this in my care plan.'
- **Know your rights**. Learn more about your rights by reading the [Statement of Rights info sheet](#).
- If you're unsure or worried about anything you can **contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**. It's free and private. They can give you advice and talk to your provider on your behalf if you want them to. Call **1800 951 822** or email info@agedcarequality.gov.au



Aunty Grace, Aunty Sandra and Aunty Jeanette on speaking up about your rights



'Years ago you had to take what was given and it feels good now to speak out and ask questions.'
– Aunty Sandra



'Don't be afraid to speak up ... we have a right to be cared for in a proper and respectful way.' – Aunty Grace



'It's your right to speak up if you need help with your aged care. We have every right to ask questions. We have every right to challenge ... We're not big-noting ourselves. It's our right.' – Aunty Jeanette



[Learn more about speaking up about your rights and watch the video.](#)



Aged care facts

We've busted some common myths to help you talk to family, friends or community about aged care.

✗ **False:** If I'm getting aged care I won't be able to look after my grandkids anymore.

✓ **True:** You can still look after your grandkids – even if you're getting aged care support.

✗ **False:** Aged care means moving into an old folks' home. I don't need that. I'm not leaving my home.

✓ **True:** You can get aged care support in your own home and on Country. This can be help around the house, shopping, or something else.

✗ **False:** I don't have a say in how I'm cared for.

✓ **True:** You have choices about how you are cared for. You can ask for things that are important to you – like being cared for by a man or woman. You can speak up about how you want to be cared for so you're comfortable with the care you're getting.

✗ **False:** If I speak up instead of saying nothing, no one will listen or I'll get in trouble.

✓ **True:** You have the right to quality and culturally safe aged care. It's important to speak up if you're unhappy with your care. You or your family can talk to your provider or with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.



Contact us

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

Website: www.agedcarequality.gov.au/FirstNations

Phone: 1800 951 822

Email: info@agedcarequality.gov.au



13 YARN

If you're going through a tough time, you can also call **13 YARN (13 92 76)** to speak to a First Nations crisis supporter at any time of the day or night.



The Older Persons Advocacy Network

If you find it hard to talk to the service provider, there are people who can help you do this. You can call the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) on **1800 700 600** for free help. A national team is available to talk to you from Monday to Friday (8am – 8pm) and on Saturday (10am – 4pm). More information is available at www.opan.org.au



The Elder Care Support Program

The Elder Care Support program is designed to support older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families to understand, navigate and access the aged care services they are entitled to. This program is delivered by the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO). You can call **02 6246 9300** for more information. More information is available at www.naccho.org.au/elder-care-support-program



Phone

1800 951 822



Web

agedcarequality.gov.au



Write

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
GPO Box 9819, in your capital city