



# Fact sheet for assessors | Ability to capture client's preference for First Nations Assessment Organisation

**Please note: This fact sheet is to support assessors from the period Feb-July 2025. Further advice will be provided prior to July 2025.**

## About

First Nations assessment organisations will rollout out from July 2025 to provide culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed aged care assessments. This will empower older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to access aged care services that meet their needs.

First Nations assessment organisations will provide older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- an improved assessment experience
- increased support to maintain at-home independence for longer
- more choice when seeking a culturally safe aged care assessment.

## Timeline

The First Nations assessment pathway will commence rollout from 1 July 2025. The rollout will begin with a small number of First Nations organisations.

Some pilot sites will commence in March/April 2025 to test the approach and get ready.

Over time, the service will extend its reach and work towards covering more areas across Australia.

## Key changes that impact assessors

From February 2025, the My Aged Care (MAC) system will be able to record if an older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client would prefer to have their assessment completed by a First Nations assessment organisation. Assessment organisations will be able to refer a client to a First Nations assessment organisation if available in their region. First Nations organisations will have the ability to self-refer clients.

This will usually be captured at client registration and confirmed at triage.

The client's preference for a First Nations assessment organisation will be visible on their client card.

Assessors should:

- record this preference when registering the client
- confirm this information when completing the demographic details at triage.

The preference will then display in both the client's details and on the client's card.

Full guidance material is available in the [My Aged Care Assessment](#) Manual.

### Frequently asked questions for assessors:

Question	Answer
Will all older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want a First Nations assessment?	Not necessarily. While some people may prefer a First Nations organisation, others may prefer the first available appointment from any organisation in the Single Assessment System, and some may prefer to use a mainstream organisation. The option for a First Nations assessment organisation will provide a choice for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people based on their own individual preferences.
Do all assessment organisations have to capture a client's preference for a First Nations assessment, even if they are not able to offer one?	<p>Yes, we need to collect the preference information for demand planning so all people who have identified they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander are to answer the secondary question. It is important data that must be captured. This will inform the future, progressive roll out of the initiative.</p> <p>Clients will be able to nominate their preference in the My Aged Care portal themselves from July 2025, until then it is expected that the preference will be captured at triage. During the transition period, while people are becoming familiar with the use of the preference button; some clients some may come through to assessors with a blank preference.</p>
External partners like GP's won't capture the FNAO preference	External referees, such as General Practitioners, will not be able to record a preference for a First Nations assessment

Question	Answer
<p>until a later release (Oct 25), so the FNAO preference field may be blank when it goes through to triage. At triage, a client may come through to the assessment organisation without a preference indicated.</p> <p>What if an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander client does not have a preference indicated?</p>	<p>organisation in the system until October 2025. While existing preferences will be confirmed at registration and captured at triage during the transition period, the preference may sometimes still be blank at the point of assessment.</p> <p>To inform demand planning, it is expected that assessors should ask every person who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander if they would prefer a First Nations assessment organisation, if available.</p> <p>Suggested script:</p> <p><i>"I can see you have/haven't nominated a preference for a First Nations assessment. Some First Nations assessment organisations are starting to provide aged care assessments from this year. If a First Nations assessment organisation became available in your area, would you prefer that?"</i></p>
<p>How will existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients in the system be marked regarding their preference for a First Nations assessment organisation?</p>	<p>Their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status won't change, and the field for First Nations assessment organisation preference will be left blank. There will be no errors or warnings for existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients who do not have a First Nations assessment organisation preference recorded. When they have a reassessment/assessment their preference will be updated at triage.</p>
<p>What if a client requests a First Nations assessment, but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the assessor is not an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person</li> <li>the assessor does not work for a First Nations assessment organisation the client lives in an area where there are no First Nations assessment organisations?</li> </ul>	<p>The assessor should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>register the client's preference (for demand planning)</li> <li>inform them that a First Nations assessment organisation is not available in their region yet</li> <li>register the client for the Single Assessment System.</li> </ul> <p>Suggested script:</p> <p><i>"First Nations assessment organisations are starting to provide aged care assessments over the next few years.</i></p> <p><i>It will take time for these organisations to grow across Australia.</i></p> <p><i>There is not one available in this area yet. I will record your preference for future interactions. In the meantime, you can continue with [insert mainstream organisation] who has assessment spots available now. All Single Assessment System assessors have undergone cultural safety training".</i></p>
<p>How can Team Leaders transfer a referral to a First Nations assessment organisation if one is in the client's area? How will they</p>	<p>When transferring a client, any First Nations assessment organisation available in the area will be prefixed with "FNAO-" and appear at the top of the list.</p>

Question	Answer
know the organisation they refer onto is a FNAO? Does the portal support this?	If there isn't one available, then no organisation on the list will have the prefix. Users will also get a warning when they try to transfer if the client has indicated a preference, if the assessment organisation is not a First Nations assessment organisation.
Will Triage Delegates be able to transfer a referral to a First Nations assessment organisations if one is in the client's area? (Noting that in R32, Team Leader (TL) and Triage Delegate (TD) roles will be split.) If not, what's the process?	Team Leaders can transfer the referral to a FNAO. A referral can only be transferred prior to the assessment starting. Team leaders can then transfer to a FNAO in the region if available as per the usual process.
What to do if a client doesn't want to continue the assessment process because no First Nations assessment organisation is available?	<p>From February 2025 a new rejection reason 'Client prefers a FNAO', will be available in the IT system. An older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person should not be rejected based on a client's preference unless it is a last resort. A transfer prior to the assessment is preferable to a rejection.</p> <p>Suggested script:</p> <p><i>"First Nations assessment organisations are starting to provide aged care assessments over the next few years.</i></p> <p><i>It will take time for these organisations to grow across Australia.</i></p> <p><i>There is not another one available in this area yet. I will record your preference for future interactions. In the meantime, you can continue with [insert mainstream organisation] who has assessment spots available now. All Single Assessment System assessors have undergone cultural safety training".</i></p>
Where can assessors find more information about First Nations assessment organisations?	<p>More information can be found on the <a href="#">Department of Health and Aged Care website</a>.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The enquirer can email their question to the Department of Health and Aged Care (department) at: <a href="mailto:firstnationsagedcareassessment@health.gov.au">firstnationsagedcareassessment@health.gov.au</a></p> <p>The department will respond within 5 business days.</p>
What if a provider comes up as both a First Nations assessment organisation and as part of the broader Single Assessment System for the region?	The First Nations assessment organisation will be prioritised at the top of the list if there is a FNAO preference in the system. The First Nations assessment organisation will have 'FNAO-' prefix at the front of the title, and the mainstream organisation will be listed as they have been in the past.

Question	Answer
What if a person wishes to remove their preference for a First Nations assessment organisation?	They can withdraw this preference at any time and uncheck the box.
Can an older person vet the First Nations assessment organisation before being referred?	Yes, an older person has a right to decide if they want to be referred to a specific organisation. The assessor would share the information about which First Nations assessment organisations are available.
What if they have a preference for a First Nations assessment organisation, but do not wish to be referred to any of the ones that come up.	<p>If the older person does not wish to be referred to a specific organisation, they should be connected with either another First Nations assessment organisation, or another assessment organisation in the Single Assessment System.</p> <p>The individual may wish to remove their preference for a First Nations assessment organisation or keep it as more organisations may be available in the future.</p> <p>If referring to the broader Single Assessment System, please do not remove their preference for a First Nations assessment organisation if it is still their preference.</p> <p>Suggested script:</p> <p><i>“I can see that [organisation name] and [organisation name] are the First Nations organisations available...” ‘If you would prefer not to go with one of those, I will keep your preference in the system for future interactions as there may be more choice in future. For now, I will connect you with [insert mainstream organisation] who has assessment spots available now. All Single Assessment System assessors have undergone cultural safety training”.</i></p>
If asked, why is there not a First Nations assessment organisation available in my area?	<p>This initiative will begin with a small pilot in March 2025, and officially begin in July 2025 in selected regions.</p> <p>The initiative will then progressively roll out throughout the country from there. It is important that all assessors accurately record the preferences of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as that will inform the rollout process.</p> <p>Suggested script:</p> <p><i>“Some First Nations assessment organisations are starting from July 2025 to provide aged care assessments in parts of Australia.</i></p> <p><i>It will take time for organisations to grow across Australia.</i></p>



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<p>If asked when a First Nations assessment organisation will be available in my area?</p>	<p><i>There is not one available in this area yet. I will record your preference for future interactions. In the meantime, you can continue with [insert mainstream organisation] who has assessment spots available now. All Single Assessment System assessors have undergone cultural safety training”.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Suggested script:</p> <p><i>“Some First Nations assessment organisations are starting from July 2025 to provide aged care assessments in parts of Australia.</i></p> <p><i>It will take time for organisations to grow across Australia.</i></p> <p><i>There is not one available in this area yet.</i></p> <p><i>We don’t have the information about when more are coming, but they will scale up slowly over time.</i></p> <p><i>I will record your preference for future interactions. In the meantime, you can continue with [insert mainstream organisation] who has assessment spots available now. All Single Assessment System assessors have undergone cultural safety training”</i></p>
<p>How will assessors and assessment organisations receive updates about the rollout?</p>	<p>The department will provide updates in the monthly Aged Care Assessment Update newsletter at the end of each month.</p> <p>As services roll out, they will be prefixed with “FNAO-” and appear at the top of the list of available organisations.</p> <p>First Nations assessment organisations will also be listed on the interactive map of available services. The <a href="#">Department of Health and Aged Care website</a> will be updated regularly.</p>