



# Council of Elders

## Meeting Communique – 18 June 2025

**Reform Implementation** – Council of Elders welcomed the update about the brief deferral to the new Aged Care Act, now starting on 1 November 2025. Council acknowledged the benefit to take extra time to ensure the aged care system is ready, and providers and workers are well prepared.

Council members noted a continued need for further information about the changes; particularly around what new services will look like before the new Act begins. Council discussed the need for accurate and timely information for older people, carers and providers. Members highlighted the value of face-to face conversations to help people better understand the changes and how they will be affected.

**Fees and Contributions** – Council emphasised the importance of protecting the rights of older people and making sure they have real choice when it comes to aged care. The department explained that the delay gives more time to ensure providers are ready. The Council discussed the complexity of how personal information is used to calculate fees, and how older people must be given clear and correct information before they are asked to agree to payments or sign service agreements.

**National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines** – Council welcomed updates on the implementation of the National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines, recognising the importance of high-quality design in creating safe, respectful, culturally appropriate and comfortable aged care environments. This included discussion regarding the support materials that will supplement the Principles and Guidelines for the design of aged care homes, so they better meet the needs of older First Nations people through culturally safe design. Council notes the challenges faced in rural and remote areas and CALD communities and the importance of including local voices in decision-making. They supported the development of culturally appropriate design for First Nations communities and offered to contribute to future co-design work and support the roll out of these principles across the country.

**Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP)/Support at Home** – Council asked for further information about CHSP changes, particularly how it will operate during the transition period to the new Aged Care Act. Members raised concerns about the demand for community transport and the need for flexibility in contracts especially in rural and regional areas. Members highlighted there is still some confusion within the community about when changes will happen and what services may be affected.

Members discussed changes to the Support at Home program and the need for more information and easy to understand material to be shared as soon as possible to assist older people in preparing for changes.

**Supported Decision Making** – Council supports the introduction of the registered supporter role under the new Aged Care Act as an important step toward promoting supported decision

making. This role will help older people stay in control of their care decisions with support when needed. Council highlighted the importance of education of this role making information easy to understand, in easy-read formats and accessible to people from all backgrounds. Training for aged care workers, providers and community organisations will assist in raising understanding and awareness. Members raised the need to explain how the supporter provisions are distinct from decision-making authorities set out in state and territory legislation. Council is committed to sharing information through their networks and supporting this change across the sector.

The next meeting of the Council of Elders will be virtual on 13 August 2025.