



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing



Working in aged care

**A guide for workers about the
new Aged Care Act and resources
to help you**

What's new in this booklet

This booklet is for people working in the aged care sector across a diverse range of roles and specialisations. It provides an overview of the aged care reforms, what's been achieved to date and what you need to know to continue providing safe and quality care for older people.

The start of the *Aged Care Act 2024* (the Act) from 1 November 2025 marks one of the most significant changes to Australia's aged care system. Our aim with this booklet is to help you understand the key changes for workers and what's available to help you prepare.

We have included an overview of the resources, training modules and programs available to help you navigate new ways of working under the Act. We have also listed some of the programs, specialist training and development opportunities available to support you in your career and where to find out more.

Whatever your role, you each play a vital part in delivering the safe, high-quality, rights-based care older people deserve. Together with your employers, we want to make sure you are supported, feel valued and recognised for the important work you do in ensuring older people live their best lives.

We update this booklet regularly and share copies at events we attend. The content within is also available on our website and promoted in our *Working in Aged Care Update* newsletter.

We encourage you to join our newsletter mailing list to stay up to date with new information affecting workers, development opportunities and ways you can engage with us:

 health.gov.au/aged-care-newsletter-subscribe

Download a digital copy of this booklet:

 health.gov.au/resources/publications/working-in-aged-care



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Improving Australia's aged care system

Over the past few years, the Australian Government and the sector have been working together to improve aged care in response to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. These wide-ranging reforms are providing positive change by increasing transparency and improving the quality of care provided to older people in Australia.

These changes to aged care will help to deliver:

- high-quality care for older people
- better conditions for workers
- a sustainable, innovative sector.

The Australian Government works closely with peak bodies and other groups that represent and advocate for the needs of older people, aged care workers and the aged care sector, including: the Aged Care Transition Taskforce, the Aged Care Council of Elders, Council on the Ageing (COTA), National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council (NATSIAACC), the National Aged Care Advisory Council, Ageing Australia and the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN).

 health.gov.au/aged-care-reforms



Improvements we've made so far

We have already made big changes for people receiving and delivering aged care:

- The *Aged Care Act 2024*, commencing from 1 November 2025 which enacts a range of improvements to place older people at the centre of aged care.
- Introducing reforms that recognise the valuable role that workers play in delivering safe and quality aged care.
- Introducing a Code of Conduct for aged care workers to ensure services are delivered in a safe, competent and respectful manner.
- Introducing whistleblower protections for aged care workers.
- Providing \$17.7 billion in funding to support award wage increases for aged care workers.
- Funding to improve the cultural understanding of the aged care workforce to deliver culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed services to older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Continuing workforce development programs that have so far attracted almost 16,000 new workers to the home care sector and improved career pathways for nurses in aged care.
- New regulations to emphasise stronger working relationships, transparency and engagement in the aged care sector, to give older people more trust, control and confidence in their aged care.
- Strengthening the Aged Care Quality Standards to improve the quality of care that older people receive.
- Publishing Star Ratings to help older people and their representatives to compare the quality of aged care homes.

Helping you navigate the reforms

We are here to help you understand what is changing in aged care and what you need to do.



health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-reforms/navigating-the-reforms

Aged care reforms roadmap

The aged care reform roadmap provides an indicative timeline for key reform activities. It is updated regularly to keep the sector informed.



health.gov.au/aged-care-reform-roadmap

The new Aged Care Act

The *Aged Care Act 2024* commences from 1 November 2025. It delivers major changes to aged care and puts the rights and needs of older people at the centre of the new system. The Act replaces previous legislation and becomes the main law that sets out how the aged care system works, including:

- a Statement of Rights for older people
- who can access aged care services
- funding of aged care services, including what the government will pay and what an older person can be asked to pay
- the Support at Home program
- the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards which outline what quality and safe aged care services look like
- stronger powers for the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (ACQSC).

Embedding a rights-based approach in the Act

The Act puts the rights of older people first. It changes how aged care services are delivered to older people in their homes, community settings and residential aged care homes, and supports older people to get the care and dignity they deserve.

The Act includes a Statement of Rights, which replaces the previous Charter of Aged Care Rights. It sets out 13 specific rights that older people have, including the right to:

- make their own decisions about their own life
- have their decisions not just accepted, but respected
- get information and support to help them make decisions
- communicate their wishes, needs and preferences
- feel safe and respected
- have their culture and identity respected
- stay connected with their community.

The Act will enforce obligations of aged care providers and workers to ensure their delivery of aged care services is aligned with the Statement of Rights.

 health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-act/rights

A guide for the aged care workforce: Understanding and adapting to the Aged Care Act 2024



This eLearning module will help you understand the changes introduced by the *Aged Care Act 2024*, and how these changes apply to aged care workers and volunteers.



health.gov.au/the-new-aged-care-act-in-practice

Key changes for the aged care workforce

The aged care workforce plays an important role in delivering services under the Act. Some of the changes will affect the way you provide care to older people.

- Under the Statement of Rights, you are required to have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience to provide services to older people in a way that respects their decisions.
- Under the Statement of Principles, you are supported to be innovative, continuously improve and deliver high-quality care, and participate in governance and accountability requirements.
- Your expertise and perspectives on quality aged care delivery are recognised, and the strengthened Quality Standards creates an expectation that your employer listens to your views.
- Through expanded whistleblower protections, you can provide feedback or make complaints without fear.
- You need to comply with revised worker screening arrangements to ensure you are suitable to work in aged care.
- You must act in a way that is consistent with the behaviours set out in the Code of Conduct.

Learn more about the Act and how the changes will impact you as a worker:



health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-act/resources/workers



New ways of working

Under the Act, workers are part of a better-regulated system that is more transparent and accountable. This means you can focus on what is important – delivering safe, high-quality care for older people. Below is a summary of the new ways of working and what you need to do.

New Regulatory Model

The Act introduces a new regulatory model that promotes stronger working relationships, transparency and engagement in the aged care sector, and outlines your responsibilities and rights as an aged care worker.

What do I need to do?

You need to understand your obligations under the new model, and work with your employers to deliver care that is consistent with the Act. The resources in this booklet will support you to navigate the changes and help you understand your responsibilities under the new model.



health.gov.au/our-work/new-model-for-regulating-aged-care

Protecting older people's right to make decisions

Everyone has the right to make decisions about their life, including the support and services they receive from aged care. A key change under the Act is that every older person is presumed to have the ability to make decisions.

Some older people may want or need support to make aged care decisions. The registered supporter role is one of the changes under the Act that promotes older people's right to be supported to make their own decisions. From 1 November, older people can seek to register a supporter, if they want to. Registered supporters help older people to make and communicate their own aged care decisions.

Having a registered supporter does not stop older people from doing something they can do themselves. Older people can continue to request, receive and communicate information and make decisions.

Some registered supporters also have guardianship, enduring power of attorney or similar legal authority. These people are appointed decision makers for the older person and can make decisions on behalf of the older person under state or territory arrangements. An appointed decision maker can only make decisions on behalf of the older person in line with their active, legal authority.

An appointed decision maker does not have to be a registered supporter to make decisions for an older person. However, where possible, they should support the older person to make their own decisions. Providers must confirm the scope of an appointed decision maker's authority and any conditions before that decision maker decides on behalf of an older person.

Becoming a registered supporter does not provide a person with decision-making authority for the older person. A registered supporter's role is to support the older person to make their own decisions.

What do I need to do?

From 1 November 2025, find out if older people in your care have registered supporter(s) by asking them, or through the My Aged Care Service and Support Portal.



MyAgedCare.gov.au/arranging-someone-support-you/upcoming-changes-support-roles-and-relationships

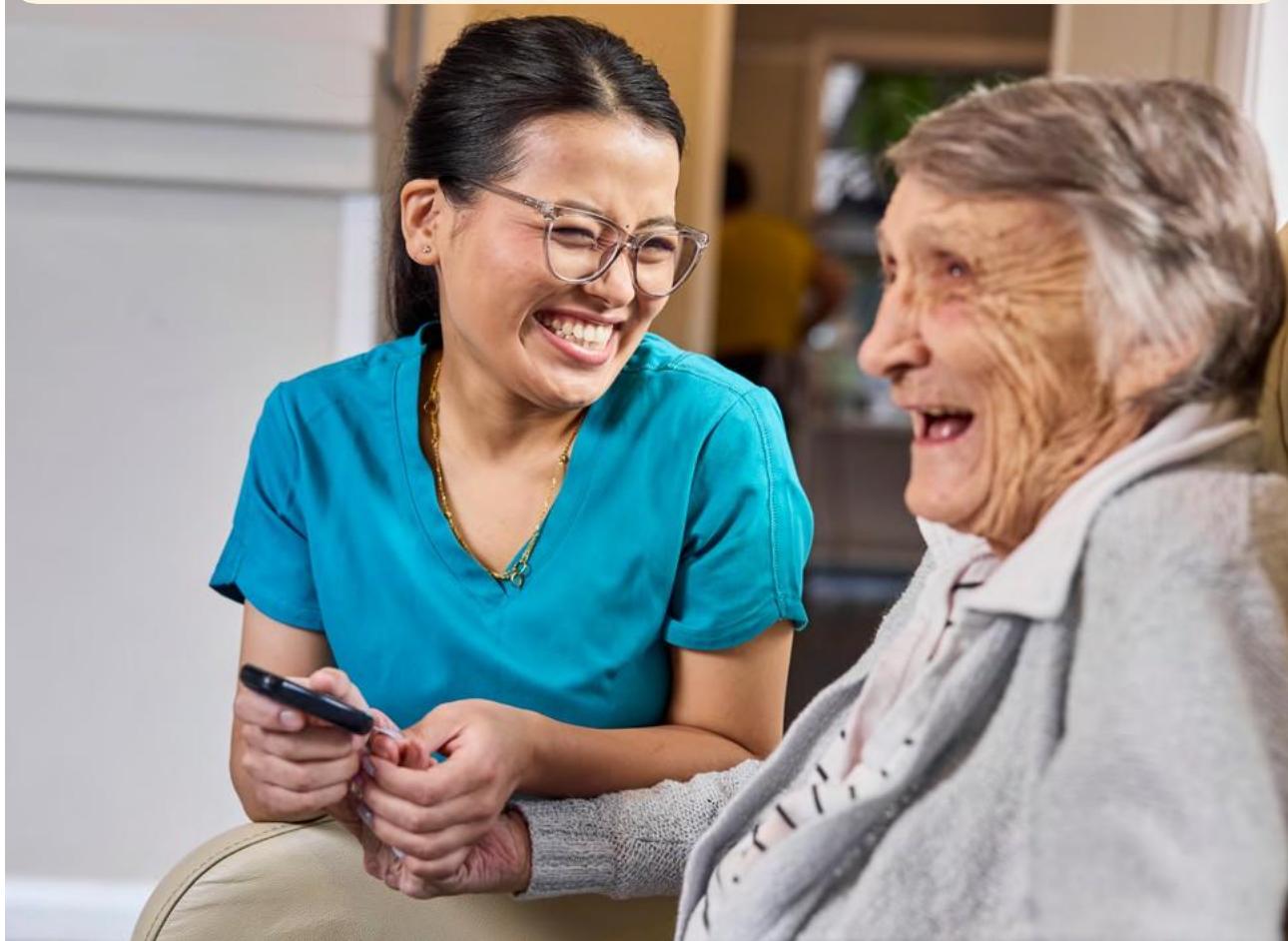
Providers and workers should adopt supported decision-making principles when engaging with older people. This includes still going to the older person to make decisions about their own care, even when they have a registered supporter.

Older people's ability to make decisions and communicate their wishes may change daily, or over time. By understanding who an older person's registered supporter(s) are, you can:

- help older people in your care be supported to make their own decisions, if they want support
- respect an older person's wishes and preferences, including who they want to be supported by and how
- help registered supporters to perform their roles, including sharing information with, and receiving information from, registered supporters where authorised by the Act.



www.health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-act/about/supported-decision-making-under-the-new-aged-care-act



Complaints and feedback

The Act establishes a Complaints Commissioner, appointed by the Minister for Aged Care. The Complaints Commissioner will work inside the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to provide an independent and transparent process for the investigation and resolution of aged care complaints.

Older people will be encouraged to share their feedback and will be able to make a complaint if they feel their rights are not being upheld.

If you are worried about how an older person is being treated or the care they are receiving, you can raise a concern with your employer or make a confidential or anonymous complaint to the Commission.

What do I need to do?

Support the people in your care to understand how complaints are managed and resolved by your organisation and make them feel welcome to share feedback, raise concerns or make a complaint.

When a complaint is made about your service, you must take steps to acknowledge and assess the complaint, plan the information you may need to collect and how you will collect it, and think about which resolution approach to take.



AgedCareQuality.gov.au/contact-us/complaints-concerns/what-do-if-you-have-complaint

Whistleblower protections

A whistleblower is someone who makes a report about a person or organisation who has not followed the aged care laws. Whistleblowing is different from making a complaint and usually involves a serious offence.

The Act will do more to protect whistleblowers than ever before. This means older people, their families, carers and workers can report information without fear of punishment or unfair treatment.

What do I need to do?

You will have increased protections to report individuals or organisations that do not follow the aged care law, without fear that you will be punished or treated unfairly.

You may also receive reports from older people, their families or carers and you must take steps to ensure in such instances that the whistleblower protections are upheld.



health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-act/about#protection-for-whistleblowers

Worker screening

Worker screening is part of a national worker registration scheme that we are progressively rolling out across the sector.

Initial changes to worker screening begin from 1 November 2025 in line with the Act. These changes will mostly impact people working for Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) providers.

This will pave the way for broader changes to aged care worker screening in 2026.

What do I need to do?

From 1 November 2025, there will continue to be two screening options for working in aged care. You will still need either:

- a police certificate (not older than three years) that does not record certain offences
- a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Worker Check.

From 1 November 2025, the list of offences that stop you from working for a CHSP provider will align to the same set of offences that stop you from working for a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program (NATSIFACP) provider.

For other providers, the offences that currently apply will remain the same.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/screening-requirements

Future of worker screening

Together with states and territories, the Australian Government is working towards the introduction of requirements for aged care worker screening to align with NDIS requirements. This new national worker screening system will mean more robust checks for the aged care sector.

An aged care worker screening check will be recognised in the NDIS sector and vice versa. Final arrangements are subject to agreement with the states and territories and will not commence before 2026.



Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

The Aged Care Quality Standards define what good care looks like and reflect the quality of care older people should expect.

We have strengthened the Quality Standards to:

- focus on areas like person-centred care, clinical care, diversity, dementia care, food and nutrition, partnership with older people and provider governance
- be user friendly and measurable
- use simpler language and reduce duplication
- reference the new Statement of Rights.

What do I need to do?

Read the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's guidance for aged care workers to help you prepare for the strengthened Quality Standards.



AgedCareQuality.gov.au/resource-library/draft-guidance-aged-care-workers

Code of Conduct

The Aged Care Code of Conduct describes how providers, workers and volunteers must behave and treat people receiving aged care. It ensures that older people can have confidence and trust in the quality and safety of the care they receive.

There are no changes to the Code under the *Aged Care Act 2024*. However, the wording about who the Code applies to has been updated.

What do I need to do?

You must always act in a way that is consistent with the Code of Conduct.



AgedCareQuality.gov.au/workers/code-conduct-aged-care/what-code-conduct-aged-care

Changes for providers and employers

Learn more about what the Act means for your employer and the ways they can support their workforce:



health.gov.au/resources/publications/aged-care-reforms-a-guide-for-providers-and-the-sector

Building a valued, skilled and supported workforce



Professional FrameWork

As we embed the reforms and new ways of working, it is vital that we strengthen and support the aged care workforce to deliver care that meets the needs and rights of older people.

We developed a Professional FrameWork that outlines the actions we are undertaking to achieve this, which will be delivered under 8 key priorities:

- uplifting pay and conditions
- boosting education and training
- improving culture
- encouraging innovation
- increasing career pathways
- improving workforce planning
- building evidence base, and
- building leadership capability.

Learn more about the Professional FrameWork to build and strengthen the aged care workforce:

 www.health.gov.au/professional-framework

Learning and development opportunities for aged care workers

Our training and professional development programs support workers with the coming changes and equip you to deliver safe, consistent, and high-quality aged care services.

Free education and training programs are also available for you to upskill and develop your knowledge in specialist areas, supporting you to deliver care that meets the individual needs of your clients.

eLearning for the Aged Care Act 2024

Our e-learning modules will help you understand the changes introduced in the Act and the new ways of working in aged care. Each module includes a version designed specifically for aged care workers.

 health.gov.au/the-new-aged-care-act-in-practice

Fee-Free TAFE courses

New and existing aged care workers may be eligible for Fee-Free TAFE, where you can study for an accredited diploma, certificate or short course without having to pay tuition fees. This initiative provides opportunities for school leavers, people seeking a care and support job, workers wanting to upskill and unpaid carers.

 YourCareer.gov.au/fee-free-tafe

Regional, Rural and Remote Home Care Workforce Support Program

This program supports personal care workers to access the training required to work in aged care and develop the necessary skills to assist older people to remain independent and live at home. It will add an extra 4,000 home care workers over 3 years to regional, rural and remote areas where workforce shortages are the most acute.

 health.gov.au/our-work/home-care-workforce-support-program

Apprenticeships

Start vocational training, earn a wage and get hands-on experience in aged care, including when you are at school.

 apprenticeships.gov.au/apprentices

Equip Aged Care Learning Packages

The Equip Aged Care Learning modules are an excellent resource for people working in aged care or seeking employment in the sector. You can learn from a range of aged care related topics including an overview of the aged care system, mental health and trauma-informed care.

 EquipLearning.utas.edu.au

Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia (ARIIA)

ARIIA runs several workforce capability development programs for aged care workers, including the Innovation Capability Program and the Leading Innovation for Transformation (LIFT) Leadership Program.

You can also access their Knowledge and Implementation Hub which provides free resources on a range of priority topics for aged care, including clinical governance, social isolation and information on urgent and critical needs in the aged care sector.

 ariia.org.au



Opportunities for nurses specialising in aged care

Transition to Practice

This program supports new aged care nurses with training and professional development in their first two years in the sector. Nurses who take part in the program will receive specialist training in aged care and gerontological nursing, and mentorship from senior aged care nurses.

 health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-transition-to-practice-program

Clinical Placements Program

This program supports Diploma, Bachelor and Master of Nursing students with high-quality clinical placements in the care and support sector, including aged care. Students are supported by a specialist clinical facilitator and have access to free resources through an online hub.

 health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-nursing-clinical-placements-program

Scholarships

Scholarships will be available for nurses and aged care workers to gain qualifications and improve their expertise in caring for older people.

 health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/opportunities-for-nurses



Specialist training programs

Indigenous Employment Initiative Program

This program funds employment and training opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in non-clinical roles. In addition to creating rewarding career pathways in aged care, this initiative improves cultural safety for older people in aged care by growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care workforce.



health.gov.au/our-work/indigenous-employment-initiative-program

Dementia Training Program

The Dementia Training Program provides free training and resources to improve the quality of care for people living with dementia. The program offers a national approach to education, upskilling and professional development in dementia care.



dementia.org.au/professionals/professional-development-and-training

Palliative care education and training

Palliative care training can increase your knowledge to provide palliative and end-of-life care for people who have a life-limiting illness and equip you with the skills required to meet the requirements of the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards.



health.gov.au/palliative-care-training

Free training opportunities for aged care workers

You can find more information in this factsheet about free training opportunities and resources for aged care workers:



www.health.gov.au/free-training-opportunities-for-aged-care-workers

Supporting people with diverse needs

Caring for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Information and resources are available to help you provide high quality, culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed aged care for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. These resources were developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

 AgedCareQuality.gov.au/workers/caring-first-nations-older-people

The Healing Foundation

The Healing Foundation has a Healing Portal hub which brings together culturally appropriate information about working with and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander older people.

 HealingFoundation.org.au/healing-portal/

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) is an interpreting service for people with limited English proficiency. They support people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in employment, education and community engagement. TIS National provides access to interpreters over the phone, via video conference, or in person.

 tisnational.gov.au

Aged care translation service

You can request translated materials for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who prefer to communicate in a language other than English. Speak to your employer if you need to access this translation service for someone in your care.

 DiversityAgedCare.health.gov.au

Silver Rainbow

Silver Rainbow provides training and resources that promote awareness and support workers in delivering inclusive aged care services to older people in the LGBTIQA+ community.

 lgbtqihealth.org.au/workforceresources

Deaf Connect

Deaf Connect can support you to provide care for older people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing through the National Sign Language Program. Speak to your employer about accessing this service.

 health.gov.au/contacts/deaf-connect

Diversity education and resources

Planning for Diversity workshops promote more inclusive aged care services for older people from diverse and marginalised groups. They are beneficial for aged care workers responsible for quality improvement, service planning and compliance.

 open.org.au/education/diversity-education

Resources are available to help you provide more inclusive aged care services that address the needs of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Includes e-learning modules, training and face-to-face workshops.

 culturaldiversity.com.au

Supporting veterans

The Department of Veterans' Affairs provide resources and training programs for nurses and personal care workers who support veterans.

 dva.gov.au/get-support/providers/programs-services/community-nursing-services-and-providers/training-and-resources-community-nursing-providers



Opportunities for workers in rural and remote areas

Rural Locum Assistance Program for Aged Care (Rural LAP Aged Care)

You can register as a locum and help alleviate aged care workforce shortages in rural and remote areas. While on placement, you'll receive an hourly wage plus superannuation, an incentive payment and travel allowance. The program will also arrange and pay for travel and accommodation while on placement.

Rural LAP Aged Care also offers an incentive scheme for permanent placements in MM 4 to MM 7 areas of Australia.

 rurallap.com.au/aged-care-locums/aged-care-workers/

Rural and Remote Aged Care Management Training Program

The Rural and Remote Aged Care Management Training Program provides training to aged care managers and staff working in rural and remote settings throughout Australia.

 BarbaraSchmidtandAssociates.com.au/rural-and-remote-aged-care-training



Careers in aged care

Aged care is changing for the better. It's an area where you can enjoy flexible, rewarding work that improves the lives of older people. There are multiple pathways to join the aged care workforce for students, job seekers and professionals.

Requirements for aged care workers

There are currently no minimum standard qualifications for some entry-level aged care roles. However, many organisations and roles will require a formal qualification.

Before you can work in the sector, you will need a worker screening check.

Depending on your role, state or territory and organisation, you may also need a:

- up-to-date COVID-19 and/or influenza vaccination
- Working with Vulnerable People check
- Working with Children check.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/i-want-to-work-in-aged-care

Additional requirements for aged care workers

All aged care workers and volunteers must be eligible to provide care. Learn more about the screening requirements for aged care workers at:



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/screening-requirements

Training for new aged care workers

There are many ways to boost your skills and prepare to enter the aged care workforce. Find out how we are training new workers to meet the needs of older people.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/learning-and-development

Becoming an aged care nurse

There are multiple pathways into the aged care sector for nursing students, enrolled and registered nurses and nurse practitioners.

Aged care nurses must have a qualification, such as a:

- Diploma in Nursing (enrolled nurse)
- Advanced Diploma in Nursing (enrolled nurse)
- Bachelor of Nursing (registered nurse)
- An NMBA-approved program of study leading to endorsement as a nurse practitioner.

Nurses must be formally registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce/getting-into-the-workforce

Volunteering in aged care

If someone you know is lonely or socially isolated and would benefit from friendship and companionship, they can request a volunteer visitor through the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme. Visits are available to anyone who receives government-subsidised residential aged care or Support at Home, including care recipients approved or on the National Priority System.



health.gov.au/our-work/aged-care-volunteer-visitors-scheme-acvvs/request

Training opportunities and resources are also available to support aged care volunteers and volunteer managers.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care/volunteers



Where you can find support or further information

- Fair Work Ombudsman – **FairWork.gov.au**
- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation – **anmf.org.au**
- United Workers Union – **UnitedWorkers.org.au**
- Health Services Union – **hsu.net.au**
- Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) – **catsinam.org.au**
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) – **naccho.org.au/aged-care/**
- Ageing Australia – **AgeingAustralia.asn.au**
- Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission – **AgedCareQuality.gov.au**
- National Dementia Helpline – **dementia.org.au/get-support/national-dementia-helpline**
- Dementia Training Australia – **dta.com.au/**
- Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer – **health.gov.au/contacts/chief-nursing-and-midwifery-officer**
- Australian College of Nurse Practitioners – **acnp.org.au/contactacnp**
- Australian College of Nursing – **acn.edu.au/contact**
- Australian Health Practitioners Regulation Agency (AHPRA) – **ahpra.gov.au**
- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) – **NursingMidwiferyBoard.gov.au**
- Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICACs) – **health.gov.au/our-work/partners-in-culturally-appropriate-care-picac**
- Volunteering Australia – **VolunteeringAustralia.org**

Aged care advocacy

The Australian Government funds aged care advocacy support for older people, their families and carers. Advocates can speak on behalf of older people, support them to resolve concerns and ensure their wishes and preferences are heard and respected.

You can connect an older person with an advocate in their state or territory by calling the Aged Care Advocacy Line on **1800 700 600**.



health.gov.au/our-work/national-aged-care-advocacy-program-nacap



Improving Australia's aged care system together

Stay up to date on the latest news and information specifically for workers. Subscribe to Working in Aged Care Update, our newsletter for the aged care workforce.



health.gov.au/aged-care-newsletter-subscribe



Learn more about how we are supporting the aged care workforce and explore your options to join the sector.



health.gov.au/topics/aged-care-workforce



Meet with us in-person at one of the upcoming events that we are attending around Australia.