



# Webinar series: Home matters – Rethinking aged care design Questions & Answers

## Webinar 6: Principle 4 – Connect with Community

14 May 2026

Thank you to everyone who attended and submitted their questions.

This document provides answers to questions that were not addressed by the panel during the live session. If you have any further questions please contact: [design.dementiasupport@health.gov.au](mailto:design.dementiasupport@health.gov.au)

### Design

**What are some important ways aged care workers can help older people feel safe, included, and connected in the community?**

Under the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards all residential care providers and aged care workers are expected to provide a residential community where older people feel safe and at home. Older people should have opportunities to do things that are meaningful to them and are supported to stay connected with their community. For staff this may involve:

- identifying older people's key relationships, community involvement, hobbies and interests

- collaborating with residents and families to create meaningful and enjoyable activities
- providing spaces for family and friends to visit
- helping residents to participate in community activities outside of the home.

For more information see the strengthened Quality Standards guidance for [Standard 7 – The residential community](#).

The [National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines](#) aim to support people to connect with family, friends and community, continuing to participate in meaningful activities. Providers and staff are encouraged to work with local community organisations to develop aligned services to support continuing participation in community life (Guideline 4.1 – Neighbourhood Access). Providers can also consider creating spaces and amenities on site that both residents and the public can use to increase social interaction (Guideline 4.2 – Community Hub). Some examples include cafés and restaurants, supermarkets, places of worship, childcare centres, playgrounds and gardens.

## **How do you foster cultural connection in a home?**

The [National Aged Care Design Principles and Guidelines](#) recognise the importance of cultural diversity and the need for a well-defined ‘model of care’ that addresses governance, staff training, daily activities, and the culturally specific needs of each person. The Principles and Guidelines include design strategies to foster cultural connections in a home, such as:

- consulting residents and staff about the introduction of pets within the home (Guideline 1.11 – Nature Indoors)
- highlighting resident’s cultures through personal items and art in common areas (Guideline 2.1 – Personalised Home)
- setting up spaces in each household for small group activities related to residents’ cultures (Guideline 2.2 – Small Households)
- providing quiet outdoor areas suitable for contemplation and cultural traditions (Guideline 3.4 Garden Destinations)
- creating spaces and opportunities for family gatherings, religious services, community events (Guideline 4.2 – Community Hub).

[Designing Culturally Safe Aged Care Homes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People](#) also provides practical guidance for creating homes that are connected to Country, culture and community.

Additionally, all aged care providers are expected to provide services that meet the needs of people from diverse backgrounds, including older people who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). The *Aged Care Act 2024* embeds diversity and inclusion through the [Statement of Rights](#) and [Statement of Principles](#).

The Australian Government offers a range of services to support the delivery of culturally safe and appropriate care and access to information in a person’s preferred language:

- [free interpreting and translating services](#) for older people, families and carers
- [Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care](#) supports training to equip providers with the skills needed to support older people from CALD communities

- [Planning for Diversity workshops](#) offer training for providers to create inclusive environments and service delivery for people from diverse and marginalised groups.

## **What about facilities where there isn't a dedicated lifestyle or community engagement coordinator? How can connections & relationships be facilitated in these contexts?**

Recreational and social activities are an important part of residential aged care. They are included in the [list of services](#) that residential aged care providers must provide under the Aged Care Act (2024) and Aged Care Rules (2025). Providers must also meet requirements under the strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards such as ensuring individuals receive services that optimise their quality of life, promote use of their skills and strengths and enable them to do the things they want to do ([Outcome 7.1](#)).

Residents must have access to varied recreational activities and social events that cater to their diverse needs, supporting emotional wellbeing and community interaction. Recreational and social programs and activities must include options for at least one activity each day that is not screen, television or meal based and regular outings into the community. There are many ways staff can support connections and relationships. This could include offering activities such as board or card games, reading, organised walks, trivia, cultural celebrations, sports, arts programs, or school visits.

Existing programs like the [Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme](#) may also be utilised to help build connections and relationships. Providers should consult with residents and their family and carers about the activities planned, and accommodate any feedback or suggestions made, where possible.

For more information see the [Residential Care Service List Guidance for Providers](#) (section 4.7) and the strengthened Quality Standards guidance for [Standard 7 – The residential community](#).

Additionally, under the [strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards](#) all providers are expected to have a workforce strategy ([Outcome 2.8](#)). This ensures there is enough suitably qualified workers to provide safe, quality care and services. Providers must show they understand and manage their workforce needs, including strategies for possible workforce shortages and future planning to meet their provider obligations.

## **Question for Sr Grace - For the new Nazareth building how are you providing security for the proposed cafe on street and still keeping it welcoming for the local community?**

[Holy Family Services](#) are fortunate to benefit from a large facility situated away from the main road, which provides an initial level of safety. The internal roadway is subject to a 10km/h speed limit and is equipped with speed humps to reduce the speed of incoming traffic. Furthermore, within the building itself, the area between the café and the residential dwellings is separated by a secured door, accessible only to authorised staff and residents of the facility. The outdoor area of the café has established safety boundaries formed by walls and landscaping.