



Australian Government

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2019

The Australian Government's goal is to ensure respectful, inclusive and culturally safe aged care services are accessible to all older people living in Australia regardless of their background or life experiences.

Everyone in the aged care sector has a role to play in meeting this goal. In recognition of the Government's role, this action plan sets out our commitment to providing well-rounded support to all people as they age. Whether barriers to appropriate aged care are perceived or real, they must be addressed to meet the diverse needs of the community.

The Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-Group will monitor the government's progress and work with the Department of Health to identify further opportunities for action.

Outcome for Consumers 1: Making informed choices

Older people have easily accessible information about the aged care system and services that they understand and find the information helpful to exercise choice and control over the care they receive.

Ensure the diverse characteristics and life experiences of older people are embedded in the design and development of the aged care system, and that information about the aged care system is accessible to all.

| Action | Timeline |
|---|--|
| <p>Communicate information to the sector about diversity best practice and program outcomes through the Department of Health's Bulk Information Distribution System.</p> <p>This will include publicising Better Practice Award winners who specifically address diversity.</p> | <p>Ongoing from January 2019</p> |
| <p>Conduct a consumer information campaign following the launch of the Aged Care Diversity Framework action plan resources to improve aged care awareness among target population groups.</p> <p>Monitor the impact of the Diversity Framework and action plans in consultation with the Aged Care Sector Committee and Diversity Sub-group.</p> | <p>Early 2019</p> |
| <p>Make the My Aged Care Service Finder more useful for people with diverse characteristics and life experiences, including by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving service find functionality. 2. Providing guidelines on when providers should use the specialist ticks on My Aged Care. 3. Exploring options for verification of provider claims about specialist status on My Aged Care. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. March 2019 2. March 2019 3. Late 2019 |
| <p>Provide guidance for aged care providers on how to recognise and involve a consumer's 'family of choice' in decision-making about their care.</p> | <p>From 2019</p> |
| <p>Develop an easily accessible 'Questions you can ask' tip sheet that consumers can use to determine if a service is appropriate for them.</p> | <p>Late 2019</p> |
| <p>Improve consumer access to and understanding of information about provider performance against quality standards.</p> | <p>From July 2020</p> |
| <p>Ensure that information provided to consumers is easy to understand and consistent with Aged Care Quality Standards. Service agreements are considered during assessment against applicable requirements of the Aged Care Quality Standards.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> |

Outcome for Consumers 2: Adopting systemic approaches to planning and implementation

Older people are active partners in the planning and implementation of the aged care system.

Respond to feedback from consumer and community consultations in developing and designing the aged care system and supporting programs. Collect, monitor, analyse and use data about diverse characteristics and life experiences of older people to ensure equitable access and outcomes.

| Action | Timeline |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Improve representation of diverse groups on Government aged care advisory bodies, including Aged Care Sector Committee, Aged Care Finance Authority and the Safety & Quality Commission's advisory group. | Ongoing |
| Fund a National Advisory Group for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care to provide expert advice which can inform Government's policy development. | January 2019 |
| Improve mental health-aged care linkages by implementing the \$102.5 million 'Mental health support for older Australians' 2018-19 Budget measure. | From 2018 |
| Continue to develop the cultural competency of Department of Health staff to support inclusive policy and program design, including by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing a Department of Health (corporate) <i>Diversity and Inclusion Strategy</i> 2. Including a diversity module in the Department of Health's new mandatory training program for all staff. 3. Investigate implementing a CALD cultural competency program to complement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and LGBTI awareness training currently offered to Department of Health staff. 4. Report on activities undertaken (at a Divisional level) to support the Department of Health's Reconciliation Action Plan. | 2018-2020 |
| Strengthen aged care - primary health care links in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGBTI peoples. | Scoping work to commence in 2019 |

Outcome for Consumers 3: Accessible care and support

Older people in rural, remote, regional and metropolitan Australia have access to aged care services and supports appropriate to their diverse characteristics and life experiences

Identify and overcome barriers faced by older people in accessing the aged care system.

| Action | Timeline |
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| Continue to improve the accessibility of My Aged Care for consumers with diverse characteristics and life experiences, in consultation with these consumers. | Ongoing |
| Ensure My Aged Care, ACAT and RAS staff receive ongoing mandatory training, support and continued development of culturally safe trauma informed practices in the My Aged Care, Regional Assessment Service and Aged Care Assessment Team workforce. | From 2018 |
| Expand the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program in remote and very remote locations to provide culturally safe aged care services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people close to family and community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conduct a home care places round - conduct a residential aged care places round | 2018 |
| Work with the sector to increase the availability of information in languages other than English, including by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promoting government-funded translating and interpreting services to the sector. 2. Review existing policies for government-funded translating and interpreting services with the view to removing barriers to access. 3. Consider opportunities to improve Indigenous language interpreting for aged care, with reference to the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's <i>Protocol on Indigenous Language Interpreting</i>. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Late 2019 2. Late 2019 3. Late 2019 |
| Simplify the aged care means testing form and process for consumers, as announced in the 2018-19 Budget. | 2019 |
| Pilot a number of aged care 'system navigator' models to address barriers to accessing aged care. Ensure that the perspectives of people with diverse characteristics and life experiences are central to the design and evaluation of trials. | From October 2018 |
| Support flexible approaches to aged care assessments in order to provide outreach and culturally appropriate assessments; these could include partnerships and engagement with local organisations. | 2020 |

Outcome for Consumers 4: A proactive and flexible aged care system

A proactive and flexible aged care system that responds to the needs of existing and emerging diverse groups, including an increasingly diverse aged care workforce.

Collect and use data and evidence on current and emerging trends in diversity to design, implement, evaluate and improve aged care systems and supports.

| Action | Timeline |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Develop a data governance group which will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. oversee the integration and analysis of existing data sets and b. identify, and implement strategies to address, data gaps to ensure that older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences achieve equitable access and outcomes. c. monitor actions taken to improve data gaps, and review as required. | From 2019 |
| Initiate a co-design process to identify new data points and/or business process changes required to improve the collection and availability of data in relation to the access which diverse cohorts have to aged care assessments and services. | From 2019 |
| Ensure diversity is included in all future aged care funding rounds and have clear guidelines on evidence that must be provided about services saying they can deliver diversity targeted services. | Ongoing |
| Prioritise Community Visitors Scheme grant applications with a particular focus on special needs groups. | 2018 and future grant opportunities. |
| Formalise an ongoing monitoring and advisory role for the Aged Care Sector Committee Diversity Sub-group. | Late 2018 |
| Improve dissemination of outcomes from diversity-focused aged care projects previously funded by the Department of Health, to broaden the evidence base for future program design. | 2019 |
| Consider the findings of the Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC) program evaluation, particularly with respect to future program priorities. | 2019 |

Outcome for Consumers 5: Respectful and inclusive services

Services effectively meet the specific needs of older people with diverse characteristics and life experiences, their families, carers and representatives in a respectful and inclusive way.

Evaluate the effectiveness of services and supports in meeting the diverse characteristics and life experiences of consumers, implement improvements when needed and share outcomes with all stakeholders.

| Action | Delivery date |
|---|---------------|
| Assess aged care providers against the new Aged Care Quality Standards: including for the way they deliver safe and inclusive services to people with diverse needs and life experiences. | July 2019 |
| Ensure that feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, CALD and LGBTI consumers is captured proportionately at Quality Review and accreditation. | Ongoing |
| The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission to support quality assessors to engage appropriately with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGBTI consumers, including the appropriate use of interpreting. The Commission to monitor the use of interpreters during quality assessments. | Ongoing |
| Investigate strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGBTI people in the aged care workforce Include options for recognising the skills of bilingual and bicultural aged care staff through appropriate credentialing of language and cultural skills. | From 2019 |
| Investigate strategies to increase number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD and LGBTI people in the assessment workforce as part of the streamlined assessment program. | 2020 |
| Develop the capacity of the aged care workforce to care for seniors from diverse communities building on existing programs and resources. | Ongoing |

Outcome for Consumers 6: Meeting the needs of the most vulnerable

Older people can access high quality and culturally safe aged care services and supports that meet their needs irrespective of their personal, social or economic vulnerabilities.

Collect data on service use by vulnerable consumers and evidence on current and emerging trends and market failures, to improve systems and supports that ensure equity of access and outcomes.

| Action | Delivery date |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Ensure the needs of older people with HIV are reflected in the national HIV strategy. | Ongoing |
| Explore innovative models of service delivery for Aboriginal consumers, for example: (a) blended models of care that combine aged and health care; (b) models which integrate assessment, case management and service delivery | Review of existing evidence from 2019 |
| Promote trauma informed care practices (for example, the Blue Knot Foundation's Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery) to aged care service providers and advocacy providers. | Late 2019 |
| Review existing policies to support consumers who are unable to pay their full aged care costs, including availability of concessional places. | 2020 |