

A QUALITY VISION FOR AGED CARE



Our Vision

That all Australian Government subsidised aged care services will demonstrate high quality, consumer centred services that are safe, effective, inclusive, caring, transparent, accessible, responsive, and well-led. The principle of continuous improvement underpins these characteristics at both a service and sector level.

Foreword

The provision of safe, quality aged care for all consumers is non-negotiable; 24 hours a day, each and every day of the year. This principle is vital to achieving our goal of providing consumers the best possible aged care experiences and outcomes.

Safety and good health care are important for older Australians, but are not sufficient on their own to guarantee good quality of life or high quality aged care. The definition of a good quality of life differs from one person to another, however, a range of elements combine to determine what creates high quality aged care. A key element to quality aged care is the recognition of each person as an individual, their wellbeing and their health care journey, supported by their chosen representatives, family members, friends and loved ones.

This Vision is intended to further inspire the community and sector to understand what is meant by quality aged care. Additionally, it will support the sector in working with consumers to deliver consumer-focused services and products which will enhance the quality of life and quality of care and recognise the diverse characteristics and life experiences of consumers and their loved ones.

► Under the *Aged Care Act 1997*, Commonwealth law requires approved providers to meet the Aged Care Quality Standards (the Standards) and to comply with the Charter of Aged Care Rights (the Charter) regardless of the type of Australian Government funded aged care and services they receive. The Standards and the Charter will drive improvements to the quality of care delivered to older Australians and encourage innovation, excellence and continuous improvement. The Vision, the Standards and the Charter are intended to be complementary and support the improvement of quality aged care across the sector. The Standards and the Charter are part of the legislative framework for quality within which aged care providers must operate. In contrast, the Vision provides the aspirational description and a visual representation of what constitutes characteristics of quality of care.

Quality aged care outcomes are achieved in an environment of mutual respect between consumers, their families and carers, aged care providers and workers, government and the community.

It is timely to have a clear vision of what is meant by quality in aged care as this allows existing quality service to be recognised, as well as promoting continuous quality improvement. This supports appropriate levels of quality care being reached and maintained into the future, so that older Australians will receive the standard of care they and the wider community expect.

The Vision can be reviewed and modified, if appropriate, as community expectations change.

Vision for quality in aged care

Why do we need a Vision?

The Aged Care Sector Committee has developed this Vision for quality in aged care to:

- ▶ promote public confidence and surety to older Australians and the wider community that the aged care system is committed to delivering quality inclusive care for all older Australians;
- ▶ inspire, support and guide aged care service providers to **continuously improve** quality and increase consumer satisfaction;
- ▶ emphasise the **quality principles** as foundations for the aged care workforce; and
- ▶ **inform Government policy** on aged care reform.

Principles

The core principles underlying this Vision are:

- ▶ **“Nothing about me without me”**
This means care decisions that directly affect a consumer should not be made without consulting them.
- ▶ **Choice and control**
Carers and consumers alike should have an approach to helping each individual participate in life to the fullest by providing choices, activities, meals and daily life routines that suit each individual as much as possible and which are inclusive of their diverse life experiences and characteristics.
- ▶ **Empathy in communication and seeking to understand others’ point of view**
Empathy is simply recognising emotions in others, and being able to “put yourself in another person’s shoes”, understanding the other person’s perspective and reality.
- ▶ **Respect for diversity**
The ultimate measure of the effectiveness of the aged care sector is how it impacts on the most vulnerable. Regardless of background, life experience, culture, body, gender or sexuality, it’s important that aged care is culturally safe, appropriate, accessible, and sensitive to the diverse individual needs of older Australians, and to ensure an aged care system where people, regardless of their individual gender, social, cultural, sexual, linguistic, religious, spiritual, psychological, medical and care needs, are able to access respectful and inclusive aged care services.
- ▶ **Support and encouragement of independence**
It is important to encourage independence in older people and to provide the opportunity for them to maintain a better quality of life for themselves. Encouraging independence should include giving people the ability to do a wide variety of activities.

Definition of Quality Aged Care

Quality aged care enriches the life of older people, allowing them to age with dignity and respect and helps ensure they have the best possible life they can. It also promotes independence and contributes to overall well-being through providing a safe environment in a setting of an older person's choice.

Quality services encompass eight essential characteristics; safe, effective, inclusive, caring, transparent, accessible, responsive and well-led.

These characteristics are described below:

► **Safe**

Care is delivered to consumers in a way that is culturally safe and prevents and minimises risks to their health and safety. When risks or harms are identified, steps are taken to remedy or resolve and learn from these to prevent reoccurrence. Consumers are also supported to take appropriate personal risks if that is their informed choice.

► **Effective**

Effective care is evidence based and leads to improved outcomes for individuals and communities. The service provided is fit for purpose and continuously improves. Individual needs and experiences are central to the adoption of emerging technologies.

► **Inclusive**

Aged care services embed an inclusive culture where everyone, regardless of their diverse characteristics and life experiences, is valued and respected and is able to fully enjoy and participate in the way services are delivered. Services ensure that there are no barriers to access and that they are inclusive in all their practices, from governance to direct service delivery.

► **Caring**

Consumers are treated with dignity, empathy, and respect. Services are delivered in ways that are responsive to the needs or preferences of each individual to ensure their emotional safety and privacy. This includes supporting consumers with their intimate relationships regardless of sexuality or gender.

► **Transparent**

Consumers, families and carers have easy access to, and are provided with, accurate and suitable information to enable and support them to make decisions and participate in care. This includes sharing information arising from feedback and complaint processes.

► **Accessible**

People can readily access quality care suited to their needs regardless of their gender or their cultural, sexual, financial, social or personal circumstances.

► **Responsive**

Care is timely, dependable and consumer centred, providing the highest possible standard irrespective of the location. Individual needs are understood and met or exceeded. Services have sufficient skills and resources to meet the diverse needs of consumers.

► **Well-led**

Well-led aged care organisations are underpinned by effective governance that defines their aims and translates them into action; robust systems to make sure things stay on track; meaningful consumer engagement; a well trained workforce and a culture of improvement to keep getting better.

Safe

Safe: Care is delivered to consumers in a way that is culturally safe and prevents and minimises risks to their health and safety. When risks or harms are identified, steps are taken to remedy or resolve and learn from these to prevent reoccurrence. Consumers are also supported to take appropriate personal risks if that is their informed choice.

Standard 3: Personal care and clinical care

I get personal care, clinical care, or both personal care and clinical care, that is safe and right for me. Clinical care and personal care are best practice and tailored to my needs.

I have the right to:

- 1. safe and high quality care and services.
- 4. live without abuse and neglect.
- 13. personal privacy and to have my personal information protected.
- 14. exercise my rights without it adversely affecting the way I am treated.

Effective

Effective: Effective care is evidence based and leads to improved outcomes for individuals and communities. The service provided is fit for purpose and continuously improves. Individual needs and experiences are central to the adoption of emerging technologies.

Standard 3: Personal care and clinical care

I get personal care, clinical care, or both personal care and clinical care, that is safe and right for me. Clinical care and personal care are best practice and tailored to my needs.

- 3. have my identity, culture and diversity valued and supported.
- 4. live without abuse and neglect.
- 12. complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly.

Standard 4: Services and supports for daily living

I get the services and support for daily living that are important for my health and well-being and that enable me to do the things that I want to do.

Inclusive

Inclusive: Aged care services embed an inclusive culture where everyone, regardless of their diverse characteristics and life experiences, is valued and respected and is able to fully enjoy and participate in the way services are delivered. Services ensure that there are no barriers to access and that they are inclusive in all their practices, from governance to direct service delivery.

Standard 1: Consumer dignity and choice

I am treated with dignity and respect, and can maintain my identity. I can make informed choices about my care and services, and live the life I choose.

- 2. be treated with dignity and respect.
- 3. have my identity, culture and diversity valued and supported.

Information provided to me is current, accurate and timely, and communicated in a way that is clear, easy to understand and enables me to exercise choice.

Caring

Caring: Consumers are treated with dignity, empathy, and respect. Services are delivered in ways that are responsive to the needs or preferences of each individual to ensure their emotional safety and privacy. This includes supporting consumers with their intimate relationships regardless of sexuality or gender.

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Transparent: Consumers, families and carers have easy access to, and are provided with, accurate and suitable information to enable and support them to make decisions and participate in care. This includes sharing information arising from feedback and complaint processes.

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Information provided to me is current, accurate and timely, and communicated in a way that is clear, easy to understand and enables me to exercise choice.

Standard 2: Ongoing assessment and planning with consumers

I am a partner in ongoing assessment and planning that helps me get the care and services I need for my health and well-being.

Standard 6: Feedback and complaints

I feel safe and am encouraged and supported to give feedback and make complaints. I am engaged in processes to address my feedback and complaints, and appropriate action is taken.

I have the right to:

- 6. access all information about myself, including information about my rights, care and services.
- 7. have control over and make choices about my care and personal and social life, including where the choices involve personal risk.
- 11. have a person of my choice, including an aged care advocate, support me or speak on my behalf.
- 12. complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly.
- 14. exercise my rights without it adversely affecting the way I am treated.

Accessible: People can readily access quality care suited to their needs regardless of their cultural, sexual, financial, social or personal circumstances.

Standard 3: Personal care and clinical care

I get personal care, clinical care, or both personal care and clinical care, that is safe and right for me. Clinical care and personal care are best practice and tailored to my needs.

Standard 4: Services and supports for daily living

I get the services and supports for daily living that are important for my health and well-being and that enable me to do the things that I want to do.

Standard 5: Organisation's service environment

I feel I belong and I am safe and comfortable in the organisation's service environment.

(Note: Standard 5 only applies where care and services are delivered in a provider's environment, for example in residential aged care or a day therapy centre.)

- 1. safe and high quality care and services.
- 2. be treated with dignity and respect.
- 4. live without abuse and neglect.
- 8. have control over, and to make decisions about, the personal aspects of my daily life, financial affairs and possessions.
- 9. my independence.

Quality Characteristics

Aged Care Quality Standards

Charter of Aged Care Rights

Responsive

Responsive: Care is timely, dependable and consumer centred, providing the highest possible standard irrespective of the location. Individual needs are understood and met or exceeded. Services have sufficient skills and resources to meet the diverse needs of consumers.

Standard 2: Ongoing assessment and planning with consumers

I am a partner in ongoing assessment and planning that helps me get the care and services I need for my health and well-being.

Standard 3: Personal care and clinical care

I get personal care, clinical care, or both personal care and clinical care, that is safe and right for me. Clinical care and personal care are best practice and tailored to my needs.

Standard 4: Services and supports for daily living

I get the services and supports for daily living that are important for my health and well-being and that enable me to do the things that I want to do.

Standard 7: Human resources

I get quality care and services when I need them from people who are knowledgeable, capable and caring.

I have the right to:

- 1. safe and high quality care and services.
- 7. have control over and make choices about my care and personal and social life, including where the choices involve personal risk.
- 10. be listened to and understood.
- 11. have a person of my choice, including an aged care advocate, support me or speak on my behalf.
- 12. complain free from reprisal, and to have my complaints dealt with fairly and promptly.

Well-led

Well-led: Well-led aged care organisations are underpinned by effective governance that defines their aims and translates them into action; robust systems to make sure things stay on track; meaningful consumer engagement; a well trained workforce and a culture of improvement to keep getting better.

Standard 7: Human resources

I get quality care and services when I need them from people who are knowledgeable, capable and caring.

Standard 8: Organisational governance

I am confident the organisation is well run. I can partner in improving the delivery of care and services.

- 5. be informed about my care and services in a way I understand.
- 7. have control over and make choices about my care and personal and social life, including where the choices involve personal risk.

Aged Care Sector Committee

The Aged Care Sector Committee provides advice on aged care policy to the Australian Government. The members are from across the aged care sector, including peak bodies, service providers, consumers and the workforce.