



Aged care – Reforms to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission, the Australian Government will invest more than \$572.5 million to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people receive quality and culturally safe aged care services, can access advice to make informed decisions about their care, and are treated with dignity and respect.

The 2021–22 Budget invests in targeted measures to improve the experience of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, increase capability and viability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and grow a skilled and culturally safe workforce.

Key measures include:

- \$106 million for a workforce of 250 Indigenous people to provide trusted face to face support and assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people better navigate and access care. This workforce will also sit alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people while Regional Assessment Service (RAS) and Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACATs) assess their care needs upon entry and while in care
- \$396.9 million will be made available for aged services to upgrade existing buildings, constructing purpose built care services, including to connect residential facilities with communities On Country and provide essential staff housing. This funding will also support health and disability services to expand into aged care delivery, and assist Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to expand into aged care
- \$61.6 million in additional service delivery funding for the 43 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Care Services. This will contribute to improved health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and promote connection to community and culture
- \$8 million to assist Indigenous organisations with governance, business, training and leadership
- Improved access to translation and interpreting services for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by increasing the availability of Indigenous interpreters and providing information and support on aged care services in a range of community languages
- A dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander assessment workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, will help to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in aged care,

addressing historical low take up rates. It will also result in training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- A minimum of 15 additional post-graduate scholarships in the Aged Care Nursing Scholarship Program each year, for three years, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses to commence and complete formal qualifications in areas of need in the aged care sector
- A minimum of 5 new post-graduate scholarships each year, for three years, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals with a focus on dementia qualifications
- Expansion of the Aged Care Transition to Practice Program to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services in its design
- Support will also be available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to complete a Certificate III qualification for positions such as Personal Care Workers, and
- Incentives will be available to assist with the recruitment and retention of a skilled and appropriate workforce to meet the needs of older Australians, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For further information, refer to the relevant fact sheets.

Why is this important?

These investments will not only ensure culturally safe aged care services are available and accessible, they will result in a more skilled, supported workforce as well as boosting local economic activity. There will be an increase in capability and viability of Indigenous organisations to deliver care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be better informed, supported and empowered to make decisions about their aged care needs.

It will also contribute to closing the health and life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation.

Collectively, these measures implement *Recommendations 29, 30, 45–48, 50–51, 53 and 53-1c* of the Royal Commission's final report.

Who will benefit?

Approximately 166,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nationally will benefit from these measures. Aged care providers and staff delivering care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, will directly benefit from the funding assistance to deliver increased services, undertake capital works to improve quality and live in appropriate staff accommodation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities will experience flow-on benefits through the creation of local jobs and increased future service delivery.