



Residential Care.

Residential aged care facilities

Many older people find that living at home becomes more difficult for a variety of reasons such as illness, disability, reduced mobility, isolation or the problems of maintaining a large property. It is important to look at the reasons for not being able to cope and find out if there are services available in your area to help you.

To find out about home support services contact My Aged Care, tel. 1800 200 422, www.myagedcare.gov.au.

What is residential aged care?

As well as providing accommodation, residential care facilities provide:

- meals
- cleaning and laundry
- assistance with showering and dressing
- nursing care including medication management
- social activities

Facilities can vary in style, size and age. Some give priority to certain groups, such as war veterans, Aboriginal people or those from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Some facilities provide a secure area and/or a special program for people suffering with dementia.

Residential care facilities may be privately owned or run by church organisations, local councils and not-for-profit organisations. The Australian Government accredits, regulates and subsidises residential aged care facilities.

Will I need to pay?

Fees do apply in residential aged care and are worked out according to your ability to pay. There are three types:

- Daily fees
- Means-tested fees
- Accommodation payments

Daily fees and means-tested fees are your contribution to your daily living costs and care (meals, laundry, cleaning, personal and nursing care).

The amount of the means-tested fee you pay will depend on your income and assets.

Accommodation payments are your contribution to the cost of the accommodation. You will pay an accommodation payment if you have income and assets over a certain amount. Facilities receive a higher government subsidy for residents who cannot pay an accommodation payment.

Hardship provisions exist to help residents who have genuine difficulty paying fees and payments.

What are 'extra services'?

Some facilities provide 'extra services'. This means that the facility offers a higher standard of accommodation, food or services. It does not mean that a higher standard of care is offered. All facilities must meet the same care standards set by the Australian Government.

Extra services facilities charge more. 'Extra services' vary and may include a bigger room, a glass of wine with the evening meal, greater choice of meals and/or superior décor. If the choice is made to enter an extra service aged care home, an extra service agreement must be made between the aged care provider and the resident, in addition to the normal resident agreement. It should specify what the home will provide at a higher standard, how much those features will cost, how often the extra service fees can be increased and by how much.

Additional optional services

All aged care facilities are able to offer additional amenities such as increased entertainment choices on an opt-in opt-out basis and charge a fee to be agreed with the resident.

What is respite?

Some facilities offer short-term care called *respite*. This is normally used to give carers a break but can also be used when a carer becomes ill, needs time off for a planned hospital stay or other reasons.

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Am I eligible?

You will need to be assessed by an **Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT)**. ACATs assess and approve people for permanent or respite entry into aged care facilities. The assessment will determine the level of care you require and how that care can best be provided. Anyone can contact the ACAT to arrange an assessment and there is no charge. A member of the ACAT will visit you and discuss your needs, including health, mobility and social needs.

From 1st July 2014 the ACAT approval no longer refers to low-level or high-level permanent residential care categories.

On 1 July 2014, all existing high-level permanent residential care approvals and low-level permanent residential care approvals that were still valid became general residential care approvals which can be used at any aged care home.

After 1 July 2014 the low-level and high-level care categories still applies for approvals for residential respite care.

Contact **My Aged Care** on 1800 200 422 to be referred to your local Aged Care Assessment Team.

Are standards of care monitored?

The **Australian Aged Care Quality Agency (Quality Agency)** accredits and monitors care standards in all facilities. Accreditation is the formal recognition that an aged care facility is operating in accordance with the legislative requirements of the *Aged Care Act 1997* and its amendments, and is providing high quality care.

Facilities must be accredited by the Quality Agency in order to receive funding from the Australian Government.

Existing aged care facilities are usually awarded three years accreditation if they are performing well.

If a facility fails to meet the Accreditation Standards or other responsibilities under the *Act*, depending on the nature of the non-compliance, it may:

- be given time to make the necessary improvements
- be approved but for less than the usual three years
- be refused accreditation
- stop receiving funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services

Accreditation Reports are available at the Quality Agency's website: www.accreditation.org.au.

How do I make a complaint?

If you are not satisfied with the service or care provided you can make a complaint to the Australian Government's **Aged Care Complaints Commissioner** tel. 1800 550 552. The Commissioner deals with complaints and concerns about aged care facilities.

You can also contact the **Aged Rights Advocacy Service Inc.** They can provide information about your rights and an advocate to help you resolve issues, tel. 8232 5377 or 1800 700 600 (country callers only).

Country services

Commonwealth-subsidised residential care facilities are also provided in larger regional centres in country areas.

In some small rural communities funding is provided by both state and Australian governments to enable hospitals/health services to provide aged care. These are called **Multipurpose Services**.

Care may be offered in **Multipurpose Services**. An ACAT assessment is required and the same standards of care apply. However fees may differ from residential aged care facilities.