

Residential Care

Aged care homes



As we age we sometimes find that living at home becomes more difficult for a variety of reasons including illness, disability, reduced mobility, isolation or the problems of maintaining a large property. When considering where to live it is important to understand 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.

If living in your own home is no longer possible, aged care homes (a.k.a. residential aged care facilities) may be one option. These places are also known by the old names nursing homes and hostels.

What is residential aged care?

In addition to providing accommodation, aged care homes 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 service specific community groups, such as war veterans, Aboriginal people or people from a diverse cultural and linguistic background.

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

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

Will I need to pay?

Fees do apply to live in residential aged care homes and are calculated according to your ability to pay. There are three types of fees:

- 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).

Whether you will need to pay means-tested fee or not and the amount to be paid 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. Aged care homes 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 aged care homes provide 'extra services'. This means the facility may offer a higher standard of accommodation, food or services for a fee. 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' vary and may include a bigger room, a glass of wine with the evening meal, a 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. The agreement should specify what the provider is including 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 homes 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 aged care homes 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.

Am I eligible for residential aged care or respite?

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

An ACAT approval for permanent placement does not grade care, for instance, low-level or high-level residential care categories.

Low-level and high-level care categories apply for approvals for residential respite care.

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

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 states 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 aged care homes.

Are standards of care monitored?

The **Australian Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission** assesses and monitors care standards in all aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.

Accreditation is the formal recognition that an aged care home is operating in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Aged Care Act 1997 and its amendments, and is providing high quality care.

Aged care homes must be accredited by the Australian Government in order to receive funding.

If an aged care home fails to meet the Accreditation Standards or other responsibilities under the Act, depending on the nature of the non-compliance, it may:

- be issued a notice of non-compliance and be given time to make the necessary improvements
- be refused accreditation
- be sanctioned and stop receiving funding from the Australian Government for new residents until issues are resolved.

Accreditation Reports are available at the **Australian Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission's website**: www.agedcarequality.gov.au.

Information on aged care homes that are currently under sanction or have been issued a notice of non-compliance can also be found at www.myagedcare.gov.au/non-compliance-checker

Aged care consumers' rights

People receiving Commonwealth-funded residential aged care services have their protected under the **Charter of Aged Care Rights**.

If you receive aged care, you have the right to:

- Personal privacy
- Exercise your rights without it adversely affecting the way you are treated
- Be treated with dignity and respect

- Safe and high quality care and services
- Access all information about yourself, including information about your rights, care and services
- Complain free from reprisal, and to have your complaints dealt with fairly and promptly
- Have a person of your choice, including an aged care advocate, support me or speak on your behalf

The full charter is available at

www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights

How do I make a complaint?

If you are not satisfied with the service or care provided you can make a complaint to the **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**, tel.

1800 951 822, www.agedcarequality.gov.au.

The Commission resolves complaints about aged care services subsidised by the Australian Government.

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)

offers free, independent and confidential services that focus on supporting older people and their representatives to raise and address issues relating to accessing and interacting with Commonwealth-funded aged care services.

Tel. 1800 700 600, <https://opan.com.au>

Aged Rights Advocacy Service is the South Australian member of **OPAN**. An advocate's role is to provide support to assist you in making a complaint, talking or helping with any of the advocacy services. It is a free confidential service. They can stand beside you or work on your behalf, at your direction, in a way that represents your expressed wishes. An advocate will always seek your permission before taking action. www.sa.agedrights.asn.au

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www.agedcare.health.gov.au for more information.

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