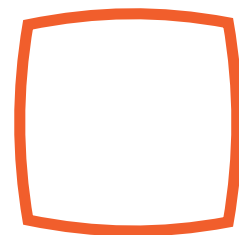
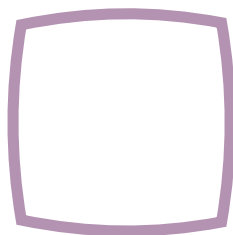
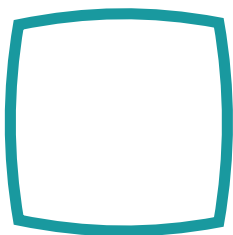
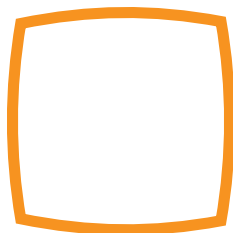


5 Steps to Entry into Residential Aged Care



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this publication may contain photos of deceased community members.



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

This booklet will help you understand what residential aged care is, why you might need it, and how to go about arranging it. The information included in the booklet is for you and also for people who may be helping you, such as family, carers or friends, to understand the process of looking for a suitable residential aged care home.

This booklet is part of a pack that includes:

- The application form you will need to apply to the residential aged care home, or homes, of your choice; and
- A form for requesting an assets assessment and accompanying information booklet.

If you find that any of these inclusions are missing from your pack, or if you need help to understand the information contained within this pack, please telephone either the:

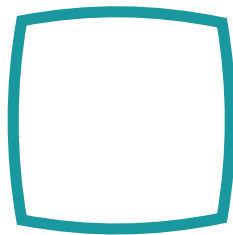
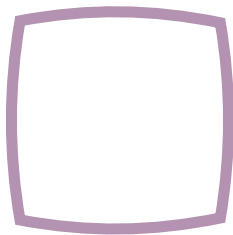
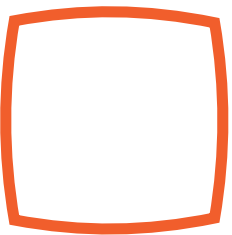
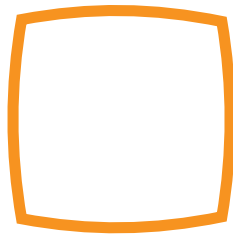
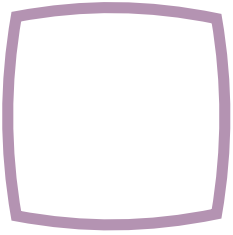
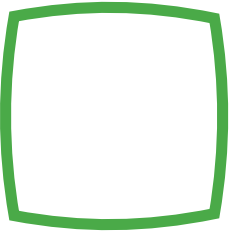
Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853

or a

Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222

These are free calls unless you are calling from a mobile telephone.

Note: This booklet provides information for residents entering care after 20 March 2008 or residents who have been out of permanent residential aged care for more than 28 days. For information on charges prior to 20 March 2008 please contact the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853.



Contents

Introduction	1
About residential aged care	3
What is residential care?	3
What types of aged care are available?	3
What is residential respite care?	4
What services do aged care homes provide?	4
What is 'extra service'?	4
Who provides the care in aged care homes?	5
How are care and services monitored in aged care homes?	5
Do I have to pay for residential aged care?	6
What if I can't afford to pay?	6
What help is available for veterans and war widow(er)s?	6
Will I need to move into another aged care home if my care needs change?	7
What aged care support is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?	7
Do aged care homes provide care for specific cultural or linguistic groups?	7
What care options are available for people with dementia?	7
What aged care options are available in rural or regional Australia?	8
Is aged care appropriate for younger people with disabilities?	8
About residential respite care	9
What is residential respite care?	9
How can I find out where residential respite care is provided?	9
Do I have to pay for respite care?	9
Can I receive respite care in an extra service aged care home?	10
How often can I use residential respite care?	10
Is residential respite care for veterans and war widow(er)s different?	10

Step 1: Assessing Your Eligibility	11
What is an ACAT?	12
How do I find an ACAT?	12
What does an ACAT do?	12
How will I be assessed?	12
How often do I need to be assessed?	13
Does the assessment cost anything?	13
What if I am not happy with the result of my assessment?	13
What should I do next?	13
Step 2: Finding an Aged Care Home	15
How do I find out what is available?	16
How do aged care homes decide who to accept?	16
Can I only apply to one aged care home?	16
Which is the right aged care home for me?	16
Step 3: Working out the Cost	17
What could I be charged?	18
What is the basic daily fee?	18
What is an income tested fee?	19
How is my income assessed?	19
When do I start paying the income tested fee?	20
Should I pay any fees before I move in?	20
What if I am an Ex-Prisoner of War?	20
What if my income is derived from compensation?	20
What effect will paying aged care fees have on my pension?	21
Why do I need to provide information about my assets?	21
What is an accommodation bond?	22
What is an accommodation charge?	23
How do I agree on the amount of accommodation bond or charge?	24
How are my assets assessed?	24
Do I have to have an assets assessment in order to enter aged care?	24
How are my assets treated if I have a spouse or de facto partner?	25

What if I can't afford to pay?	26
How do I apply for a residential aged care place?	26
Step 4: Applying	29
Why do I need to provide personal information?	30
Will my information be kept private?	30
Do I need to provide financial information?	31
How do I apply for a Residential Aged Care place?	31
Completing Part A	31
What is a power of attorney?	33
What is guardianship?	33
Who are administrators, financial managers and estate managers?	34
Completing Part B	38
Step 5: Moving and Settling In	39
When You Are Offered A Place In An Aged Care Home	40
The Resident Agreement	40
If you are not able to sign the resident agreement	42
The 'Charter of Residents' Rights and Responsibilities'	42
If you can't move in straight away	44
Preparing to Move	44
What to take with you when you move	44
Who you should notify of your move	45
Appointing a nominee to deal with the Department of Health and Ageing	46
Personal preferences in the event of serious illness	47
Moving In	47

Living in your new aged care home	48
What will happen with my money?	48
How long can I stay?	48
How much personal privacy will I have?	48
Will I be able to change my room?	49
Will I be able to change aged care homes?	49
How will my health and personal care be managed?	49
How will I get to my medical or other appointments?	49
What will happen to my private health insurance?	50
What will the food be like?	50
What activities will be offered?	50
Will I still be able to vote?	50
Will my culture, language and religion be taken into account?	50
How can I participate in the way the home is run?	51
What information am I entitled to request from the home?	51
Can I spend time with family and friends?	51
What if I have to go to hospital?	52
What if I am feeling lonely?	52
What support is there for residents to exercise their rights?	52
How do I make a complaint?	52
What is the Aged and Community Care Information Line?	53
What are Commonwealth Carelink Centres?	53
Who can I contact for information about people with Dementia?	53
What help is there for Carers?	54
Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres	54
Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres	54
Respite Care Services	55

Introduction

There are **five steps** to follow when you think you need to move into an aged care home. They are:

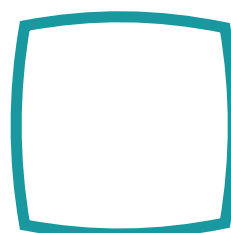
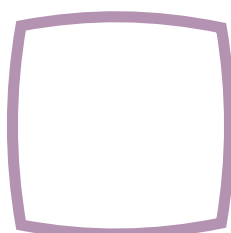
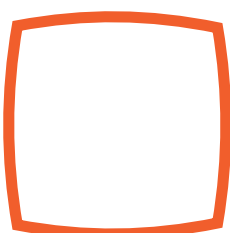
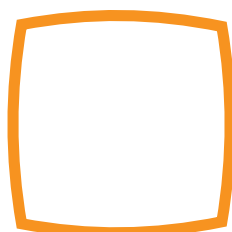
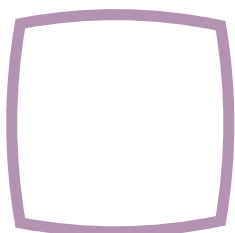
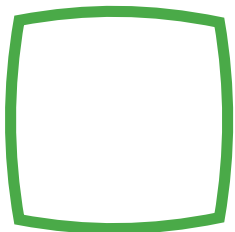
1. assessing your eligibility
2. finding a home
3. working out the cost
4. applying, and
5. moving and settling in.

By taking you through each of these five steps, this booklet will help you, your family, carers or friends to understand:

- what residential aged care is and how to find out whether you are eligible to receive it;
- how to apply for a place in a residential aged care home, and the type of information required to do this; and
- what to expect once you have accepted a place and moved into a residential aged care home.

If you need more help to understand the information, telephone the **Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853** or a **Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222** for help (this is a free call unless you ring from a mobile telephone).

You can also get more information by talking to your doctor, and aged care organisations and community groups.



About Residential Aged Care

What is residential care?

Residential aged care is for older people who can no longer live at home. Reasons can include illness, disability, bereavement, an emergency, the needs of their carer, family or friends, or because it is no longer possible to manage at home without help. Australia's aged care system aims to ensure that all older people receive support and quality care when they need it.

Aged care homes are owned and operated by people or organisations that have the approval of the government to care for you. Your aged care home will ensure that you have the care that you need, whether you just need help with day to day tasks, assistance with personal care, or 24-hour nursing care.

When it is time to choose your aged care home, you will need to know what types of aged care homes are available in your area, as this may affect the cost and the services that you will receive.

Residential aged care can be offered as either permanent or short-term care. Short-term care is called 'respite care'.

If you need less care than that offered by aged care homes you may wish to consider **independent living units** or **retirement villages**. These residential communities offer a range of services for independent older people, and are regulated by State and Territory Governments. Commonwealth Carelink Centres can provide you with information on the types of alternative accommodation in your region.

What types of aged care are available?

There are two broad types of aged care — low level and high level care.

- **Low level care** homes (formerly known as hostels) generally provide accommodation and personal care, such as help with dressing and showering, together with occasional nursing care.
- **High level care** homes (previously known as nursing homes) care for people with a greater degree of frailty, who often need continuous nursing care.

What is residential respite care?

Residential respite care provides short-term care when you need it and if you intend to return to the community. Respite care can also be provided in your own home or in a respite care centre. Residential respite care may be used on a planned or emergency basis, for example if you are ill, or to help if your carer is absent for any reason such as illness or holidays.

More information about residential respite care can be found from page 9 of this booklet.

What services do aged care homes provide?

All aged care homes must provide a specified range of care and services to residents. These requirements vary according to each resident's care needs. For all residents, services should include such things as:

- staff to provide help at all times, including in emergency situations;
- assistance with daily living activities such as bathing, showering, dressing and mobility;
- assistance with medications;
- meals and refreshments, taking into account special dietary needs;
- basic furnishings including carpets, curtains, chairs, beds and bed linen, bath towels, face washers, soap and toilet paper;
- a laundry service, cleaning services and maintenance of buildings and grounds; and
- social activities.

For residents with high level care needs, the services will also include such things as continence aids, basic medical and pharmaceutical supplies, nursing services and therapy services.

If you require specialised care for dementia, or if you have specific language, cultural or religious needs (for instance, if you want to be in a home where there are other people who speak a particular language or have similar spiritual beliefs), you should ask about that when you visit prospective homes. The section *Step 5: Moving and Settling In* provides more information on these and other special needs.

Some aged care homes provide other services, which are outlined below.

What is 'extra service'?

Some aged care homes provide what is called **extra service**. This means the home is able to provide you with a higher standard of accommodation and services, which will cost you more. As this amount varies from home to home, it is best to check costs directly with the aged care home.

However, extra service does not mean that you will be provided with a higher standard of care (such as nursing). This is because all aged care homes have to provide the same high quality care to their residents. If you pay for extra service, you may receive, for instance, a bigger room or wine with your meals.

If you are interested in obtaining a place in a residential aged care home that offers extra service, you should ask about that when you visit prospective homes.

Who provides the care in aged care homes?

All residential aged care homes are required to employ suitably skilled and qualified staff to provide assistance to residents. For example, all residents with high level care needs must have any nursing services carried out by a registered nurse.

Additionally, all residents must be provided with assistance in obtaining services from their health practitioner such as their family doctor. While you may wish the aged care home to arrange visits to a health practitioner on your behalf, you can continue to see those practitioners you usually do.

How are care and services monitored in aged care homes?

The Australian Government has implemented a number of measures to monitor the quality of care and services provided in Australian Government funded aged care homes. All funded homes must meet required accreditation standards and demonstrate continuous improvement regarding the quality of care and services provided to residents.

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency assesses aged care homes for accreditation and monitors homes to ensure their ongoing compliance with the accreditation standards. An aged care home will be able to provide you with information about its accreditation status. You may also access the Agency's website at www.accreditation.org.au. It may be useful to look at the information provided by the Agency when you look for a suitable aged care home.

The Department of Health and Ageing may impose sanctions on aged care homes that have not met the requirements of the *Aged Care Act 1997*. In these cases, information is published on the Department's website at www.health.gov.au.

Do I have to pay for residential aged care?

While the Australian Government provides substantial funding to residential aged care homes to assist with the costs associated with providing care, most residents will also pay a number of fees and charges to their residential aged care home.

The types of fees and charges payable are prescribed by the Government. These fall into two categories:

- daily care fees; and
- accommodation payments.

The amount you can be asked to pay depends on your income and assets.

Detailed information about the costs associated with living in residential aged care are discussed in *Step 3: Working Out the Cost* later in this booklet.

What if I can't afford to pay?

The Australian Government has made arrangements to help residents of aged care homes who may experience difficulty in paying for their care. Hardship provisions exist to help residents who have genuine difficulty paying fees and charges.

If you can't afford to pay, these provisions allow your fees and charges to be reduced or waived. In this case, the Government pays a subsidy to the aged care home, so that you can receive the same standard of care as everyone else in Australia's aged care system, regardless of your capacity to pay.

Please contact the **Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853** to discuss whether you may be eligible to receive this assistance and to obtain an application form.

What help is available for veterans and war widow(er)s?

Veterans and war widow(er)s are entitled to receive the same kind of residential aged care as all other Australians. However, they also have access to the Veterans' Affairs Network, which can provide many kinds of help.

For information about the Veterans' Affairs Network (VAN), telephone the **Department of Veterans' Affairs on 1300 551 918**.

Will I need to move into another aged care home if my care needs change?

While some aged care homes specialise in either low level or high level care, many offer both low level and high level care, which allows you to stay in one location even if your care needs increase. This is often referred to as **ageing in place**. Each aged care home can advise you about the care and services it will provide, and whether you can remain at that home as your care needs change.

What aged care support is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

All aged care homes are expected to provide culturally appropriate care for their residents. In addition, there is a number of homes specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There are also flexible aged care services, generally in very remote areas. For more information, please contact the **Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222**.

Do aged care homes provide care for specific cultural or linguistic groups?

To improve the quality of life and care for older people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the Australian Government funds a number of aged care homes run by ethnic community organisations. The Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care program enables aged care homes and ethnic communities to work together to establish and maintain links between residents of aged care homes and their social, cultural and linguistic networks.

Also, clustering brings together residents who share similar cultural, language or religious backgrounds within one aged care home. There are many aged care homes around Australia that provide care on this basis. Other options include multicultural services and cultural, nationality or language-specific services. To find out what's available in your area, telephone your nearest **Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222**.

What care options are available for people with dementia?

Care for people with dementia is available in many aged care homes. It may be provided in separate dementia-specific units or wings. Your Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) assessment (refer to page 12) will determine whether you are eligible for this type of care.

For more information about care options, contact your doctor, your ACAT or telephone the **Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500** (free call).

What aged care options are available in rural or regional Australia?

There are aged care homes in a large number of smaller country centres. In addition, flexible care options allow those in rural and regional areas to receive the kind of care they need in the environment that suits them best.

Multipurpose services are designed specifically for rural and regional areas, and bring together a range of health and aged care services. These may include hospitals, community services, family support and aged care. The types of services offered in your area depend on the needs of local communities.

For information about the services in or close to your area, telephone your nearest **Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222**.

Is aged care appropriate for younger people with disabilities?

There are instances where younger people with disabilities receive care in aged care homes.

State and Territory Governments are funded to provide accommodation and care for people with disabilities. If you are, or care for, a younger person with a disability who needs suitable accommodation, you should first approach your State or Territory Government Disability Department for information about gaining access to appropriate accommodation or services.

About Residential Respite Care

What is residential respite care?

Residential respite care provides short-term care when you need it and if you intend to return to the community. Respite care can also be provided in your own home or in a respite care centre. Residential respite care may be used on a planned or emergency basis, for example if you are ill, or to help if your carer is absent for any reason such as illness or holidays.

How can I find out where residential respite care is provided?

Your nearest **Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre** can help you find respite services near you. It is this type of respite care that is discussed in this booklet. Respite care can be provided in low level or high level aged care, depending on your requirements. A respite stay may be just the break you, your carer, your family or your friends need.

For more information about the different kinds of respite care, telephone the **Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853**, your regional **Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre on 1800 059 059**, or a **Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222**.

Do I have to pay for respite care?

If you receive Australian Government subsidised respite care in an aged care home, you will be asked to pay a basic daily fee, which is a flat fee. The maximum fee for all residential respite care is set at the pensioner rate of basic daily fee (see page 18). However, aged care homes may charge less than this if they wish.

You may also be asked to pay a booking fee to assist in organising your care and to secure your respite place. The booking fee is a prepayment of respite care fees and not an extra payment. This fee, however, cannot be more than a full week's fee or 25% of the fee for the entire stay, whichever is the lower.

You do not have to pay an accommodation payment or an income tested fee for Australian Government funded residential respite care.

Can I receive respite care in an extra service aged care home?

Yes. You can receive respite care on an extra service basis if the aged care home is approved to provide extra service care. You will, however, be required to pay any extra service costs in addition to the basic daily fee.

How often can I use Residential Respite Care?

Residential Respite Care provides care as a live-in care arrangement in a Residential Aged Care Facility when you need a temporary break. It can be used on a planned or emergency basis to help you in moments of stress, illness, when you need a holiday or if you are unavailable for any reason, and can be used for up to 63 days in a financial year. You need an ACAT assessment to access Residential Respite.

Respite care can also be provided in your own home or in a respite care centre for short periods of time without an ACAT assessment; however access will depend on need and availability.

For more information regarding Respite Care you can talk to your ACAT member or contact your local Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222.

Is residential respite care for veterans and war widow(er)s different?

As for all Australians assessed as needing residential respite care, veterans and war widow(er)s may receive up to 63 days of respite care in a financial year. Extensions are available in special circumstances.

If you are an entitled veteran or war widow(er), the Department of Veterans' Affairs may pay your basic daily fee for up to 28 days in a financial year. After 28 days, you are responsible for paying the fee yourself.

You may choose to use your 28 days as a combination of in-home or residential respite care.

If you are an Australian ex-prisoner of war, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will pay the basic daily fee for the full length of your stay in an aged care home for respite care.

Access to the Department of Veterans' Affairs respite care services is available through the Veterans' Home Care Program. For information about this, telephone your regional **Veterans' Home Care Agency on 133 254**.

The next section of this booklet will take you through the aged care assessment process.

Assessing your Eligibility

To find out if you are eligible for Australian Government support for residential aged care, you will need to be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT).

Aged Care Assessment Teams are known as Aged Care Assessment Services (ACAS) in Victoria.

What is an ACAT?

Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT) are teams of health professionals, such as doctors, nurses or social workers, who provide information, advice and assistance to older people who are having difficulty living at home.

How do I find an ACAT?

You can contact an ACAT directly, or your doctor, health centre or local hospital can provide a referral to the ACAT nearest to you. Commonwealth Carelink Centres can provide you with information and guidance about aged care homes and can help to put you in touch with an ACAT in your local area. A list of ACATs is also available on the Department of Health and Ageing's internet site at www.health.gov.au.

What does an ACAT do?

An ACAT can:

- approve eligibility for entry into residential aged care, in either **low level care** or **high level care**;
- give you information about residential aged care and home care services in your area;
- help you arrange special **respite care** if this is what you require; and
- approve eligibility for a package of community care to help you continue living at home or refer you to other services that will help you to continue living at home.

How will I be assessed?

A member of an ACAT will visit you and ask you some questions about your lifestyle and your health needs to help work out the best care option for you. With your approval, your doctor may tell the ACAT member about your medical history. You may want your carer, friend or family member to be present.

When the ACAT member has assessed your needs, she or he may leave you with a copy of a completed assessment, or it may be posted to you, which will tell you whether you are eligible for residential aged care. If you are assessed as eligible, you should keep this copy of the assessment as it is the approval for your move to residential aged care.



assess

How often do I need to be assessed?

ACAT approvals are valid for 12 months from the date the ACAT member signs the assessment form. You will need a new ACAT assessment if you do not move into an aged care home within 12 months of that date, or if your care needs change significantly after you are assessed.

Does the assessment cost anything?

No. ACATs are funded by the Australian Government to provide free assessments.

What if I am not happy with the result of my assessment?

If you are not satisfied with the assessment, or recommendations, made by the ACAT you should tell the person in charge of the Team who conducted your assessment.

If an ACAT considers that residential aged care or a Community Aged Care Package is not appropriate for you, you can appeal against the decision. You will be sent a letter explaining how you, or someone acting on your behalf, can appeal an ACAT decision.

What should I do next?

If your ACAT has determined that you are in need of residential aged care, either permanently or on a respite basis, you may wish to begin the process of finding an aged care home.

The next section of this booklet will take you through the process of looking for an appropriate residential aged care home.



assess

Step

2



find



Finding an Aged Care Home

Once you have been assessed by an ACAT as eligible for residential aged care, you may choose to start looking for your future aged care home.



find

How do I find out what is available?

When you look for an aged care home, it is important to understand what type of home you are considering, such as one that offers extra service places, as this may affect the cost and the services that you will receive.

Commonwealth Carelink Centres can provide you with information about aged care homes in your area, and the types of services they offer. ACATs, family, friends, your local doctor and social workers may also be able to help you find an aged care home suitable for you.

How do aged care homes decide who to accept?

Aged care homes offer places when they have vacancies. When a place becomes available, the aged care home makes a decision on who they can accept based on whether they can provide for the person's particular care needs, as well as taking into account other business matters.

Can I only apply to one aged care home?

No. You can apply to as many aged care homes as you wish. When a place becomes available, the aged care home will contact you (or the contact person that you have nominated). If you wish to accept the place, you should then meet with the home's manager to discuss your **resident agreement**.

Resident agreements are discussed in *Step 5: Moving and Settling In* later in this booklet.

Once you have been offered, and have accepted a place, it is important that you let the other aged care homes to which you applied know that you no longer need their services.

Which is the right aged care home for me?

The decision to move into full-time residential care or residential respite care is a significant one. It is important to choose an aged care home that meets your care needs and preferences.

The best way to find the aged care home that suits you is to **visit a range of homes**. They are all different, so visiting them will help you to find out what they can offer you, and what the accommodation is like. This booklet provides information for residents entering care after 20 March 2008 or residents who have been out of permanent residential aged care for more than 28 days.

You may want to note down the way you feel about each home you visit, the things you like and the things you didn't like. It will be a useful record of your impressions as you meet with staff and view the home.

Working out the Cost

In this section you will find a summary of the types of fees and charges you may have to pay. Further information on current costs is available from the Department's website www.health.gov.au or from an ACAT member.

While the Australian Government helps you with the cost of your residential aged care, by providing funding to aged care homes, it also expects those who can afford it to contribute to the cost. Aged care homes may charge a number of fees and charges, though you may not have to pay all of them.

The Aged Care Information Line can assist you if you have trouble understanding how the fees and charges associated with residential aged care work.



costs



costs

Before you make a final decision about moving into an aged care home, you may wish to check with your own financial advisers and legal representatives. Centrelink provides a free financial information service that may be helpful to you. To speak with a **Centrelink Financial Information Service Officer**, please telephone **132 300** (free call).

If you are a veteran, you may also talk to the financial advisers in the Department of Veterans' Affairs on **133 254** (free call).

What could I be charged?

Residents in aged care can be asked to make two types of payment.

- **Daily fees** contribute towards your daily living costs, such as nursing and personal care, meals, linen and laundry, as well as heating and cooling. These have two parts:
 - a **basic daily fee**, and
 - an additional **income tested fee** for residents who have a higher income.
- **Accommodation payments** contribute towards the cost of your accommodation in an aged care home. You only pay this if your assets exceed an amount set by the Australian Government. This is agreed with your aged care home when you move in and will be *either*:
 - an **accommodation bond**, if you are in low level care, or an extra service place (with low or high level care needs); **or**
 - an **accommodation charge**, if you are in high level care.

Only aged care homes that are certified by the Australian Government as meeting required standards of accommodation can charge accommodation payments.

What is the basic daily fee?

All residents (except Australian ex-prisoners of war, see page 20) are required to pay a basic daily fee.

What is an income tested fee?

The income tested fee is an amount you may be asked to pay in addition to your basic daily fee. The amount of income tested fee you may be asked to pay depends on the amount of private income you have above a certain level.

You will **not** have to pay an income tested fee if you:

- are a full-rate means tested pensioner and you first entered permanent residential aged care before 20 March 2008 and had not had a break in care of more than 28 days;
- were a permanent resident of an Australian Government funded aged care home between 1 October 1997 and 28 February 1998;
- are receiving respite care;
- have dependent children;
- are a Australian ex-prisoner of war;
- leave the aged care home, providing you do not move to another aged care home, before the provider has been notified of the amount of income tested fee you should pay; or
- are receiving care at the lowest assessable level.

How is my income assessed?

When you move into an aged care home, either Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs will assess your income so that the Department of Health and Ageing can work out the amount of income tested fee you could be asked to pay.

If you are already receiving a pension or other income support payment from Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs, you have already provided your income information to them and you will not need to do this again. If you are a non-pensioner, you will be asked to provide details of your income to Centrelink to be assessed under the same income test rules that apply to the pension.

Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs will provide your income assessment to the Department of Health and Ageing who will then write to you to advise the maximum amount of income tested fees that you could be charged.

If you choose not to supply these to Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs, you may be asked to pay the lesser amount of either:

- the *maximum income tested fee*; or
- the full cost of the level of care you are receiving.

If you are a blind person receiving a pension, you must supply the same financial information to Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs as other pensioners do. This may include details of your income.



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When do I start paying the income tested fee?

If you are charged an income tested fee, you won't be asked to begin paying the fee until the twenty-ninth day from the day you accepted your place in the aged care home.

Should I pay any fees before I move in?

Other than charging a booking fee for people applying for a respite place, as discussed on **page 9**, aged care homes cannot require you to pay application fees, donations or administrative fees before you move in.

If an aged care home asks for such a payment, you should contact the State office of the Department of Health and Ageing or your local Aged Care Advocacy Service, who will help you resolve the matter.

What if I am an Ex-Prisoner of War?

If you are an Australian **ex-prisoner of war**, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will pay your basic daily fee. You will not pay any income tested fees.

What if my income is derived from compensation?

If you need residential aged care because of an **accident or another event**, but you are entitled to compensation, the Government may not subsidise your residential care. When you move in, you should advise the home if you have a compensation claim that is pending or has been settled.

If your claim is still pending, the Government will pay a subsidy on your behalf that will be recovered once your claim is settled. From the date of your settlement, in addition to your resident fees and charges you will need to pay the Australian Government subsidy applicable to your level of care, until the amount determined for your future care has been expended. At this point, the Australian Government subsidy will be fully reinstated.

If your claim was settled before you moved in, you will need to pay the Government subsidy applicable to your level of care from the date you moved in, in addition to your resident fees and charges, until the amount determined for your care costs has been expended. At this point, the Australian Government subsidy will be fully reinstated.



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What effect will paying aged care fees have on my pension?

Most pensioners will continue to receive the same amount of pension when they enter an aged care home. Married pensioners may each receive a higher rate of pension, under the Government's special 'separated due to ill health' provision, if one or both members of the couple are in aged care.

If you were receiving rent assistance before you moved into care, this will most likely stop after you move into an aged care home. Instead, a pensioner supplement amount will be paid directly to the aged care home from the Department of Health and Ageing.

If you are receiving a Centrelink remote area allowance in addition to your pension, your residential aged care home is entitled to charge you a portion of your allowance.

If you own a home, it will not be counted as an asset for pension purposes for up to two years after you enter the aged care home. Your family home will continue to be excluded from the pension assets test if your spouse or de facto partner continues to live there after you move into an aged care home. If you are renting your home to tenants, and paying an accommodation charge for high-level care, the value of your home and any income derived from renting it will not affect your rate of pension.

If you pay a lump sum accommodation bond, it will not be counted as an asset for pension purposes. In addition, if you pay any part of an accommodation bond by periodic payments and you are renting out your former home, the value of your home and any rental income you earn will not affect your rate of pension for as long as you are required to make a periodic payment.

Why do I need to provide information about my assets?

The purpose of an assets assessment is to determine whether you may be eligible to pay an accommodation bond or an accommodation charge, or if the aged care home is eligible to receive an Australian Government subsidy on your behalf. An assets assessment also helps to clarify the maximum amount of accommodation bond or charge that you could be asked to pay.

Centrelink and the Department of Veterans' Affairs undertake assets assessments for new residents entering aged care. More information about assets assessments can be found from **page 24** of this booklet.



costs

What is an accommodation bond?

If the total value of your assets is over a certain amount, and you enter low level care, you may be asked to pay an accommodation bond.

You can also be asked to pay an accommodation bond if you enter aged care in an extra service place, irrespective of whether you have low level or high level care needs.

Accommodation bonds are like an interest free loan to the aged care home and by law must be used by the home to improve building standards and the quality and range of aged care services provided.

You cannot be asked to pay an accommodation bond unless you have entered into an agreement to do so. You will need to do this within 21 days after entering an aged care home. The amount of accommodation bond you agree to pay cannot be changed, even if your circumstances change.

Both you and your aged care home must agree upon the amount of bond payable when you move in. The Government does not fix the amount of an accommodation bond. However, you cannot be charged an accommodation bond that would leave you with less than a set level of assets. For more information see **page 24**.

You can pay your accommodation bond as:

- a lump sum;
- regular periodic payments (eg fortnightly or monthly); or
- a combination of lump sum and periodic payments.

New residents have up to six months to pay an accommodation bond as a lump sum. However, you will need to agree to an amount when you move in and you may be charged interest on the bond amount from the time you enter the aged care home.

The aged care home is allowed to deduct monthly amounts from the bond, called **retention amounts**, to use toward maintaining and improving your accommodation. This may include such things as purchasing new furnishings, improving gardens, building renovations and so on.

This monthly retention amount is agreed with you when you move into the aged care home. However, the Australian Government sets a maximum amount that the aged care home can retain.

Retention amounts can only be deducted for a period of up to five years. The bond balance will be refunded when you no longer require residential aged care.

The aged care home also keeps the interest received on the bond while you live in the aged care home.



costs

If you have paid a bond and your needs change from low level care to high level care, and you remain in the same aged care home, the bond arrangements you entered into will simply continue. If you move to another aged care home to receive high level care, you pay an accommodation charge or, with the agreement of the new aged care home involved, you can transfer your accommodation bond balance.

If you give at least 14 days notice of departing the service, your bond balance must be repaid within 14 days of giving that notice. If you notify your provider of your departure more than 14 days before you leave, they must refund your bond balance on the day you leave. If you give no notice of your departure, your bond balance must be repaid within 14 days after leaving the service. In the case of death your bond balance must be repaid 14 days after the provider is shown probate or letters of administration.

If the provider does not refund your bond balance on the day you leave, you are entitled to interest payments on your bond balance until it is refunded.

In the event your provider is unable to refund your bond because it is bankrupt or insolvent, the Government will repay your bond balance entitlement, including any interest that has accrued on the bond balance.

What is an accommodation charge?

If your assets are over a certain amount, and you enter high level care, you may be asked to pay an accommodation charge. The accommodation charge is an amount paid daily in addition to the basic daily fee and any income tested fee.

As with bond amounts, the accommodation charge is used by aged care homes to maintain and improve your accommodation.

The amount you pay as an accommodation charge must be agreed between yourself and the aged care home when you move in. However, the Australian Government sets the maximum figure you can be asked to pay. This is calculated on a sliding scale, depending on the value of your assets. In addition, you cannot be asked to pay an accommodation charge that would leave you with less than a set level of assets.



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How do I agree on the amount of accommodation bond or charge?

If you will be paying an accommodation charge or bond, you will need to make an agreement when you move in regarding the amount of the charge or the bond and the interest that will be charged. You cannot be asked to pay an accommodation charge or bond unless you have entered into an agreement.

The Australian Government requires that all residents are left with a minimum amount of assets after they pay their accommodation bond or charge. This amount is indexed annually, and can be found on the Department's website at www.health.gov.au.

You have up to 21 days after entering a home to enter into an accommodation bond or charge agreement. **Accommodation bond or accommodation charge agreements** may be included as part of a **resident agreement**.

Resident agreements are discussed in more detail in *Step 5: Moving and Settling In*.

Your bond or charge agreement should clearly state the amount you have agreed to pay, and the method by which you will pay. For instance, you may agree to pay all or part of your bond by periodic payment. If you pay all or part of the bond as a lump sum, the agreement will also need to specify the monthly retention amount.

How are my assets assessed?

Assets assessments are undertaken prior to entry, wherever possible. In this way, new residents will have financial certainty, which will help them to make appropriate choices relating to their aged care.

You will need to complete the separate form 'Request for an Assets Assessment' and submit it to Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Ask your ACAT member for a form or call the Aged Care Information Line.

Do I have to have an assets assessment in order to enter aged care?

It is not compulsory for everyone entering aged care to undergo an assets assessment. Assets assessments are necessary only if a person wants to establish their eligibility for an Australian Government subsidy for all or part of their aged care accommodation costs.



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If you choose not to have an assets assessment, you can expect to be asked to pay an accommodation bond (to be negotiated between you and the home), or the maximum amount of accommodation charge, as applicable.

How are my assets treated if I have a spouse or de facto partner?

If you have a spouse or de facto partner, you are considered to own half of your combined assets, no matter which of you holds title to the assets. Even if you don't own an asset, it may be considered as yours for assessment purposes if it belongs to your spouse or de facto partner.

If you live with your spouse/de facto partner or are separated from him or her for medical reasons, you will be asked to provide details of all assets owned by both of you.

How is the family home treated in the assets assessment?

The value of your family home is specifically excluded from your assets assessment if:

- you have a spouse, de facto partner or dependent child still living in the family home; **or**
- a close family member has lived in the family home for at least five years, and is *eligible* for an income support payment (eg the aged pension, service pension, carer payment, or newstart allowance); **or**
- a carer has lived in the family home for at least two years and is eligible for an income support payment.

The home is excluded from the assets assessment if one of the above situations applies at the date you move into the aged care home, or the date on which Centrelink or Veterans' Affairs make a determination on the value of your assets, whichever date occurs first.

A home on a family farm is excluded from the assets assessment in this way, but the paddocks surrounding the home and home paddock of the farm are still counted as part of your assets.

There are special provisions relating to the intergenerational transfer of sugar cane farms for pension entitlements. For more information, please telephone your local Centrelink office or **Centrelink general enquiries on 13 23 00**.



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What if I can't afford to pay?

The Australian Government has made arrangements to help residents of aged care homes who may experience difficulty in paying for their care. Hardship provisions exist to help residents who have genuine difficulty paying daily fees and/or accommodation payments.

Please refer to further information on page 6 of this book.

How do I apply for a residential aged care place?

The next section of this booklet will take you through the process of applying for either a *permanent* or *respite* place in a residential aged care home.



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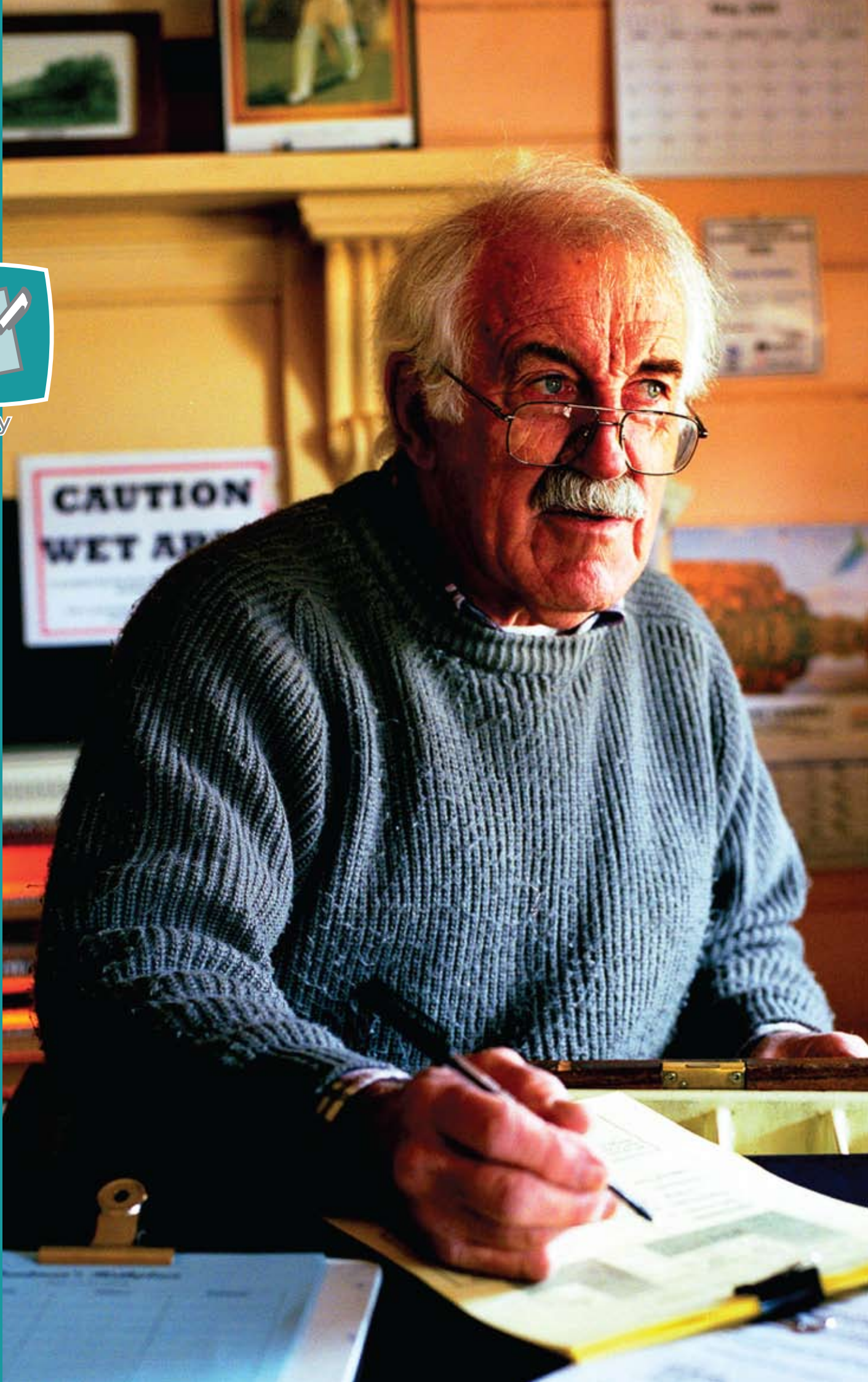


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Step
4



apply



Applying

This section provides information to help you apply to enter an aged care home.

Accompanying this booklet is a form called: *Application for Respite Care or Permanent Entry to an Aged Care Home*.

The form only needs to be completed once, preferably using black pen.

The completed form, whether you are applying for a permanent or respite place, should then be photocopied, signed and sent to each aged care home to which you wish to apply.

If you are unable to sign the application, and an authorised representative signs on your behalf, please attach a copy of the documentation authorising your representative to act on your behalf, such as a *Power of Attorney*.

Your carer, family member or friend may complete the form for you if you wish. The Aged Care Information Line can assist with any queries you may have.



apply



apply

Before you can apply for a place, either permanent or respite, in a residential aged care home, you must have a current assessment from your local *Aged Care Assessment Team* that says you are eligible to receive residential care.

For information about how you can arrange an assessment, see *Step 1: Assessing your Eligibility*, in this booklet.

The application form is also available from a number of locations including:

- your local *Aged Care Assessment Team*;
- the *Aged and Community Care Information Line*;
- *Commonwealth Carelink Centres*;
- the Department of Health and Ageing website at www.health.gov.au; or
- residential aged care homes.

The application form asks you to provide information about your personal circumstances and preferences.

Why do I need to provide personal information?

Everyone has different care needs. The information that the application forms ask for is used to help your prospective aged care home understand your particular care needs.

As a place becomes available, the aged care home will assess whether the available place is appropriate for you, and one that will help you to receive the level of care that you require.

Will my information be kept private?

Protecting your personal information is important. There are severe penalties, including imprisonment, for people who misuse personal information.

The information you provide in the forms will be treated sensitively by the aged care home. Australia's privacy laws require residential aged care homes to meet certain standards in managing the information you supply.

At the time that the residential aged care home receives your application form, they will give you a copy of their privacy statement. If you do not receive this copy, you should ask for one before you lodge your application.

Under both the *Aged Care Act 1997* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, you are entitled to access the information that the aged care home

collects from you. Please contact your residential aged care home if you wish to access your personal information.

You may also wish to obtain further information about the protection of personal information by contacting the **Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner** by telephoning on free call number **1300 363 992** or accessing their website at www.privacy.gov.au.

Do I need to provide financial information?

The form does not require you to provide any financial information.

However, if you are applying for a *permanent* place and want to see if you can be asked to pay an accommodation bond or charge, or to see if you are eligible for an Australian Government subsidy, you will need to complete the separate “Request for an Assets Assessment” form and submit it to Centrelink or Veterans’ Affairs. A copy of the form and explanatory booklet is included in this pack.

How do I apply for a Residential Aged Care place?

The application has two parts, Part A and Part B.

Part A represents the initial application form. It needs to be completed only once, and then photocopied as many times as is needed. Each copy should then be signed and a copy provided to each aged care home to which you wish to apply.

Part B needs to be completed and provided to the aged care home, either with Part A or when you have been offered and accepted a place. Part B asks for information such as details of your health insurance cover, your GP and any other health professionals that the aged care home may need to speak with once you move into the home.

When you are completing Part A and Part B of the application form, you should only complete those questions relevant to you.

Completing Part A

Question 1

This requires you to provide details about yourself, including your name, marital status and address. If you have a Centrelink or *Department of Veterans’ Affairs Pensioner Concession Card*, you should write your name exactly as it is shown on the card, and also provide the card number.



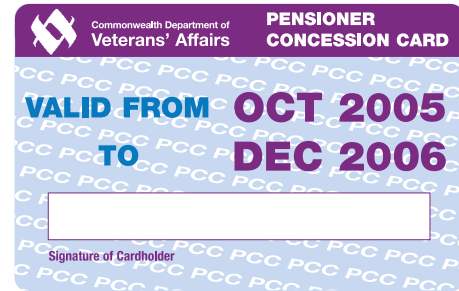
apply

Step 4



apply

Below are examples of both Centrelink and Department of Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Cards:



Please note that a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card is not a pensioner concession card.

Question 2

This question asks the type and rate of pension (or other income support payment) you receive. If you receive an overseas pension combined with an Australian part-pension, please state the paying country as well as the type of Australian pension you receive.

Question 3

This question relates to whether you wish the aged care home to contact someone else on your behalf, such as a friend or family member, about your application and about your subsequent care in the home. Because of the need to protect your privacy, under both the *Aged Care Act 1997* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, your prospective aged care home can only contact your nominated representative if you provide the appropriate authority.

By providing details about your chosen representative in this application, you are authorising your prospective aged care home to contact that person should they require clarification of information or to advise when a place becomes available. You are also authorising the aged care home to contact your chosen representative about matters affecting you and your care after you move into the home.

If you want to change your chosen representative, you should advise the home.

These questions also ask whether your nominated representative has the legal authority to make decisions for you and, if so, asks the type of authority they have. Many people who move into aged care homes choose to nominate someone else to make decisions on their behalf. This is primarily done when the resident feels they can no longer make appropriate decisions for themselves due to a physical or mental impairment.

It is important that your prospective aged care home is made aware of these types of arrangements when you apply.

Please note: If you want another person to receive and provide information on your behalf to Centrelink, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Health and Ageing, or any other organisation, you will need to contact each organisation and fill in the appropriate form that will enable your representative to receive and provide information on your behalf.

What is a power of attorney?

A **power of attorney** is a legal document that appoints someone else (the attorney) to act on your behalf in matters of money and property. For example, the attorney can manage all your financial affairs, including payment of your care fees from your bank account to selling your property or assets for you if you wish.

You can place limitations on the power of attorney to specify exactly what you would like your representative to do on your behalf. Most people want their power of attorney to continue in effect even, or especially, if they become incapable of understanding. It is easy to do this.

You can make what is called an enduring power of attorney by stating in it that you intend it to continue to be in effect even if you become 'of unsound mind'. An **enduring power of attorney** allows your attorney to look after your interests on your behalf, if you are not able to for any reason. This may be useful if you are having trouble remembering things or if you are going into hospital for a long period.

You can get advice about preparing a power of attorney from a solicitor, a community legal centre, a State or Territory trustee company or your local Magistrate's Court.

What is guardianship?

In the event that you are unable to make decisions about your personal affairs, a **guardian** may be appointed by a State or Territory Government to act on your behalf.

A guardian is generally appointed when, after your health professional and/or friends or family present evidence before a board or tribunal, it is found that without an appointed guardian to manage your personal affairs, you pose a significant personal risk to yourself.

Each State and Territory government has a board or tribunal that appoints guardians for people who can't manage their own personal affairs. The laws are slightly different in each State and Territory.



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For example, in some States and Territories other formal arrangements are available, including *Medical Guardianship* and *Enduring Power of Medical Guardianship*.

Who are administrators, financial managers and estate managers?



apply

Alternatively, if you are not able to manage your financial affairs, and you have not appointed an enduring power of attorney, and:

- real estate must be sold or leased;
- the bank will not allow anyone else to operate your account;
- you are being financially exploited;
- you are suffering because of mismanagement of your funds;
- other legal documents need signing; or
- you have a large amount of money or other investments to look after;

you may need an **administrator, financial manager** or **estate manager**. Each State or Territory Government has a board or tribunal that will decide whether or not you are capable of handling your own financial affairs, and whether you need an administrator, or a financial or estate manager. The board or tribunal will consider your best interests when deciding whom to appoint as your administrator or manager.

Other things that will be taken into account include your wishes, the size and complexity of your estate, and the qualities and capabilities of your carer or any family members or friends who are willing to take on the role. The board or tribunal may appoint a private manager to manage your affairs, or it may appoint a public official, such as those from the Office of the Protective Commissioner in New South Wales or the State Trustee in Victoria.

If a public official is appointed, she or he will charge you or your estate a fee for administering your affairs. If a private person is appointed, he or she will be supervised by the public official, who will charge you or your estate a fee for this supervision.

Question 4

When you move into your residential aged care home, you may want someone else to receive correspondence and accounts from the aged care home on your behalf. This may be the same person as you nominated in Question 3, or it may be your legal or financial manager.

If applicable, please provide evidence of the appropriate authority, such as Power of Attorney, to your prospective aged care home.

Question 5

To help your prospective residential aged care home communicate with you in a way that you are most comfortable with, particularly if you speak little or no English, you should advise your aged care home of the language you prefer to speak on a daily basis.

If you need further help, you or your carer can call the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853, and ask the operator to connect you to the **Translating and Interpreting Service**.

Question 6

When you move in to a residential aged care home, you may wish to remain in contact with community organisations that are a part of your daily life. These organisations may include your local Church group or a multi-cultural organisation. It is important that you are assisted in being able to maintain these contacts when you move.

Question 7

To help you maintain the traditions and customs that are important to you, it is important that your prospective residential aged care home is made aware of any particular religious or cultural requirements you observe.



apply

Step 4



apply



If you are applying for a *respite* place, you have just completed Part A of your application form. You can now photocopy your completed form as many times as you require. The photocopies should then be signed and one copy provided to each residential aged care home to which you wish to apply.

Don't forget to attach a copy of your aged care assessment, as well as any legal authority that your representative (if you have nominated one) may have.

You may wish to complete Part B and provide this to your prospective aged care homes with Part A. For help on completing Part B, please turn to **page 38** of this booklet.

If you are applying for a *permanent* place, you will be required to complete the remaining questions in Part A.

The remainder of Part A, for *permanent applicants only*, asks questions that will help your prospective aged care home to be aware of the legislative provisions that may apply to your individual circumstances.

It is helpful for your prospective aged care home to know this type of information in advance so that when you do accept a place in a residential aged care home, the staff will have all the information they need and can focus on helping you settle into your new environment.

Question 8

Residents whose personal income is derived from a compensation payment, or payments, are subject to paying different fees. Please refer to **page 20** of this booklet for more information about how your fees may be assessed if you are receiving a compensation payment.

Question 9

As discussed on **page 4** of this booklet, some residential aged care homes can offer a higher range of accommodation and hotel type services for an extra charge. Not all residential aged care homes offer this, however, so you may wish to ask your prospective aged care home whether this is an option for you before you apply.

If you are interested in receiving these types of services, and you

have confirmed that your prospective aged care home can offer these to you, please indicate at this question that you would like to receive information about extra services.

Question 10

This question seeks to establish whether you have received, or are currently receiving, residential aged care. It is important for your prospective residential aged care home to be aware of this, in order for them to understand which rules apply to your particular circumstances.

For example, if you are currently living in another aged care home and have paid an accommodation bond to the home, your prospective home will need to talk with your current home about arrangements for transferring your bond in accordance with provisions of the Aged Care Act.

Question 11

This question requests information about your spouse/partner, so that the aged care home can try to meet the needs of both of you, if at all possible.



You have just completed Part A of your application form.

Before you sign the form, please photocopy your completed form as many times as you wish. Each copy can then be signed where indicated. A signed photocopy can then be provided to each residential aged care home to which you wish to apply.

Don't forget to attach a copy of your aged care assessment, as well as any legal authority that your representative (if you have nominated one) may have.

You may wish to complete Part B and provide this to your prospective aged care homes with Part A. The next section can help you to complete Part B.



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Completing Part B

Part B asks you to provide further personal information that is required by the residential aged care home when you accept a place.

You must complete Part B whether you are applying for a *respite* or *permanent* place.

If a question does not apply to you, please leave it blank.

Question 1

This question asks you to provide details of any health funds you may belong to, and your Medicare and Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Repatriation Health Care Card. Your aged care home will need these details in the event of an emergency.

Question 2

It is important that, when you move into your aged care home, you continue to see the medical and health professionals who may have been treating you for some time. The information you provide at this question gives your aged care home contact details of your family doctor, and any specialists or health professionals you may be consulting for your health needs.

A health professional may include anyone who treats you for a specific condition such as an audiologist or heart specialist. You may be seeing more than one health professional, particularly if you have multiple health concerns. If this is the case, please provide your aged care home with a complete contact list of each health professional who treats you.

Question 3

Equally important to your well being when you move in to your aged care home, is that you are able to keep in contact with any religious, spiritual and/or cultural support people. By providing your aged care home with these details, the care staff will be able to contact your support person/s when you need them.

You have now completed Part B of your application form. Please ensure all the details you have provided are correct before you give a copy of Part B to your prospective aged care home.

The next section will discuss some of the things that you and your carer/s should be aware of when you move into an aged care home, as well as answering some of the more common questions asked by people who are thinking of applying for a place in a residential aged care home.



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Moving and settling in

Living in an aged care home will be different from the way that you have lived before. Not only is it a new environment but you are living with many new people all under one roof. Each aged care home will have different routines and environments.

When you know which home you're going to live in, you may arrange to visit before you move in, to familiarise yourself with the home's surroundings.

When you move into residential aged care it can also be an anxious time for your carer, your family or your friends. Even if caring for another person has been difficult, a carer may now feel a sense of loss and disorientation as his or her role changes.



move



move

Moving into an aged care home can be a stressful and emotional time for you, your carer, your family and your friends. There are a number of key things to be aware of to help make your move as smooth as possible. These include knowing what to expect when you:

- are offered a place;
- prepare to move;
- move in; and
- are living in your new aged care home.

Everyone's experience of moving and settling into their new accommodation will be different. This section of the booklet provides advice on the main things you, your family, friends or carer, should be aware of at each of the stages of moving into a residential aged care home. If you have any questions that are not answered here, you may wish to call the **Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853**.

When you are offered a place in an Aged Care Home

When you are offered, and have accepted, a place in a residential aged care home, you should complete Part B of your application and provide it to the aged care home, if you have not already done so. The manager of the aged care home should then offer you a resident agreement.

The Resident Agreement

A resident agreement is a formal agreement between you and the aged care home and should be offered to you before you move in. If you choose to enter into an agreement, you do not have to sign it at the time it is offered to you.

However if the resident agreement includes accommodation payments, then this agreement will need to be signed **within 21 days**.

You may wish to take time to seek advice from friends, family, financial adviser or a legal practitioner.

What the Resident Agreement should cover

A resident agreement is a legal document which sets out the terms of your residency, your rights and responsibilities, and the rights and responsibilities of the aged care home. The agreement offered to you by an aged care provider should be an easily understood document that covers the following:

- the name of the aged care home;
- the levels of care that the aged care home can provide to you and any limitations to those levels, such as whether the home specialises in the provision of only low or high care;
- the policies and practices that are used to set your fees and charges;
- the level of daily fee you will be asked to pay;
- if applicable, the type of extra service you may have agreed to receive and the costs you agree to pay for these services;
- the circumstances in which you may be asked to leave the aged care home;
- if you are asked to leave, how the aged care home will help you to obtain alternative and appropriate accommodation;
- how the aged care home will deal with any complaints you, your carer, friends or family may make;
- your responsibilities as a resident in the aged care home;
- the aged care home's responsibilities to you as a resident; and
- any other matters agreed between yourself and the aged care home's manager within the rules of the *Aged Care Act 1997*.

If you agree to pay an accommodation bond or accommodation charge, you will also need to enter an accommodation bond or accommodation charge agreement with the home. This can be included as part of your Resident Agreement or it can be separate. This document should cover the following details:

- the amount of accommodation bond or charge you agree to pay;
- the agreed method of payment for a bond;
- the monthly retention amount for a lump sum bond;
- the interest rate you will be charged if paying a bond by periodic payments, or for accommodation charge arrears; and
- the timeframes in which your bond must be repaid and the way in which your bond refund will be calculated, including the interest you will be entitled to on repayment of your bond.

Helping you to understand the Resident Agreement

The manager of your aged care home has a responsibility to explain and help you to understand all the terms of the agreement being offered. It is important that you do not sign the agreement if you do not understand what is being offered to you.



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You should seek assistance from family, friends or a legal practitioner to help you understand the terms of your agreement. If you have difficulty understanding the agreement because it is not written in your preferred language, you may wish to contact the Aged and Community Care Information Line on 1800 500 853 and ask to be connected to the **Translating and Interpreting Service**.

Changing the terms of the Resident Agreement

Any variations to the agreement must only be made with both your consent and the consent of the aged care home's manager. To terminate the agreement, you should give the aged care home's manager seven days written notice of your intention to do so.

Withdrawing from, or cancelling, the Resident Agreement

If, **within 14 days of signing** the agreement, you change your mind and wish to withdraw from the agreement, you should advise your aged care home in writing. If you paid any amounts under the agreement, other than your care fees and charges during those 14 days, these must be refunded to you.

If you are not able to sign the resident agreement

If you are physically unable to sign the agreement, but you understand it and you are willing to sign, you may ask someone with legal authority to sign on your behalf. This may be a person who holds *Power of Attorney* for you.

The various forms of legal authority enabling another person to act on your behalf are discussed on **pages 33 and 34** of this booklet.

The 'Charter of Residents' Rights and Responsibilities'

No matter which residential aged care home you move into, the rights and responsibilities of yourself and all other residents will be the same. To ensure the protection of your rights and responsibilities, they have been included in the legislation that all Australian Government funded residential aged care homes must abide by.

Your aged care home may provide you with a copy of the *Charter of Residents' Rights and Responsibilities* when you are offered your resident agreement. In any case, the Charter should be displayed prominently within all residential aged care homes.

Charter of Residents' Rights and Responsibilities

Each resident of a residential care service has the right to:

- full and effective use of his or her personal, civil, legal and consumer rights;
- quality care which is appropriate to his or her needs;
- full information about his or her own state of health and about available treatments;
- be treated with dignity and respect, and to live without exploitation, abuse or neglect;
- live without discrimination or victimisation, and without being obliged to feel grateful to those providing his or her care and accommodation;
- personal privacy;
- live in a safe, secure and homelike environment, and to move freely both within and outside the residential care service without undue restriction;
- be treated and accepted as an individual, and to have his or her individual preferences taken into account and treated with respect;
- continue his or her cultural and religious practices and to retain the language of his or her choice, without discrimination;
- select and maintain social and personal relationships with any other person without fear, criticism or restriction;
- freedom of speech;
- maintain his or her personal independence, which includes a recognition of personal responsibility for his or her own actions and choices, even though some actions may involve an element of risk which the resident has the right to accept, and that should then not be used to prevent or restrict those actions;
- maintain control over, and to continue making decisions about, the personal aspects of his or her daily life, his or her financial affairs and possessions;
- be involved in the activities, associations and friendships of his or her choice, both within and outside the residential care service;
- have access to services and activities which are available generally in the community;
- be consulted on, and to choose to have input into, decisions about the living arrangements of the residential care service;

continued overleaf



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- have access to information about his or her rights, care, accommodation, and any other information which relates to him or her personally;
- complain and to take action to resolve disputes;
- have access to advocates and other avenues of redress; and
- be free from reprisal, or a well-founded fear of reprisal, in any form for taking action to enforce his or her rights.

Each resident of a residential care service has the responsibility to:

- respect the rights and needs of other people within the residential care service, and to respect the needs of the residential care service community as a whole;
- respect the rights of staff and the proprietor to work in an environment which is free from harassment;
- care for his or her own health and wellbeing, as far as he or she is capable; and
- inform his or her medical practitioner, as far as he or she is able, about his or her relevant medical history and his or her current state of health.

If you can't move in straight away

Once you have agreed to accept a place in a residential aged care home, you are considered to be a resident of that home. You have up to **seven (7)** days to move in to your aged care home after you have agreed to accept the place. Aged care homes call this *pre-entry leave*.

You may be charged for your care from the date you accept your place, even if you can't move in straight away. The Australian Government will also begin to provide payments to your aged care home from the date you accept your place.

Preparing to Move

What to take with you when you move

Your aged care home will provide most of the furnishings you need. These are discussed on **page 4** of this booklet. However, you can choose to bring things with you if you want to. Ask your aged care home what you can bring with you, as each aged care home has different guidelines on what personal belongings residents can bring.

You may wish to bring some of your own furnishings, such as your favourite chair, a television/video/DVD, a radio/CD/record player, a bedside light or a small table, and other personal things such as photos and other memorabilia, books and music. You should discuss insurance of any valuables with your aged care home.

If you want staff at your aged care home to wash your clothes, make sure that each garment is labelled with your name, and that your labels are waterproof and can withstand clothes driers. The aged care home may be able to recommend appropriate labels.

Who you should notify of your move

This checklist has been prepared to help you make sure that you've informed everyone who has to know that you will be moving, and completed any other necessary tasks. There may be other people whom you will need to advise if, for instance, you are still maintaining a home.

You may need to notify the following people and organisations of your change of address:

- your family;
- your friends;
- your neighbours;
- your doctor;
- your health professional/s;
- your community nurse;
- your gardener or lawn mowing person;
- your cleaner or home help;
- Meals on Wheels and other community support services;
- Centrelink;
- Department of Veterans' Affairs;
- Australian Taxation Office;
- Medicare;
- your medical insurance company;
- your superannuation company;
- the roads and transport authority in your State or Territory (for your driver's licence);
- your local post office;
- your bank, building society or credit union;



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- your local office of the Australian Electoral Commission;
- other aged care homes to whom you have applied (if you no longer wish to consider moving in there).

If you are a pensioner or part-pensioner and have made changes to your financial circumstances (such as by paying a bond), you should advise either the Department of Veterans' Affairs or Centrelink, who will update your income and asset details.

If your doctor can no longer visit you when you move, you should ask to have your medical history sent to your new doctor. It is also a good idea to document your current medical treatments and medication to discuss with the aged care home in the development of your *care plan* (see **page 49**).

You will need to organise financial matters, such as how fees and charges will be paid, or appoint a professional adviser or relative to take care of this. You may have included this in your resident agreement. You may wish to appoint a nominee to deal with the Department of Health and Ageing on your behalf.

Appointing a nominee to deal with the Department of Health and Ageing

The Department of Health and Ageing is the Australian Government organisation responsible for Australia's aged care system.

This includes setting maximum rates for daily care fees and accommodation charges, and interest rates for accommodation bonds. If you are required to pay income tested fees, the Department will write to you from time to time if your income tested fees change as a result of a change in your income changes.

You can nominate someone to act on your behalf in dealings with the Department of Health and Ageing about your care fees. To appoint a nominee, you should complete an *Appointment of a Nominee* form, which is available from your aged care home, the **Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853** or can be downloaded from the Department's internet site at www.health.gov.au.

This form is different from the one used by Centrelink and the Department of Veterans' Affairs to appoint nominees, which cover the needs of many different kinds of clients, not just those in aged care.

Personal preferences in the event of serious illness

Many people have particular preferences about their treatment during a serious illness. During this time, although difficult, it is important to ensure that your preferences are clearly communicated to those people who may need to look after your affairs.

You may wish to provide information about your personal preferences in the event of a serious illness to your aged care home when you move in. This may include arrangements you have made through a *Living Will* or *Advance Health Directive*.

A **Living Will** or **Advance Health Directive** is a written statement of what health care you want should you no longer be able to take part in decisions about your medical treatment. This statement helps to communicate your wishes to those who care for you in the event that you are unable to express those wishes at the time.

Many people have preferences about their funerals and wills that are important to them and their family. It is important to have a Will so that your estate is distributed in the way you want. It is a good idea to provide your aged care home with the name of the executor of your will, so that the information will be available if it is needed, for example, to finalise accounts or repayment of any monies owing to you.

If you would like to discuss your preferences with your aged care home, please do so when you move in.

Moving In

When you move in, you should meet with the manager of your aged care home. Let the manager know if you need help to cope with the changes you are experiencing, and what sort of help you will need.

Your carer, your family or a friend should talk to the manager of your aged care home on your behalf if you experience memory loss or confusion. They may also wish to stay with you for a while as you familiarise yourself with your surroundings.

It can be helpful for you to arrange to arrive at a quiet period of the day when the staff have more time to assist you. Your aged care home manager can advise you when the best time is. Your aged care home will provide you with information about the types of support they may have available such as counselling or 'buddy systems' to help you settle in.



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Living in your new aged care home

The following questions are frequently asked by new residents. If you have a question that is not answered here, please speak with the staff of your aged care home, or you may wish to contact the **Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853**.

What will happen with my money?

Your aged care home will encourage and help you to maintain control of your financial affairs. If you need help to manage your finances, you can arrange for someone you trust to do this for you. This is discussed on **pages 33 and 34** of this booklet.

Some aged care homes offer services such as direct debit, which allow you to pay your bills automatically. Alternatively, you may be able to have your pension directed to the home, so that your fees and other costs, such as chemist bills, can be deducted. All aged care homes have a staff member who looks after the financial affairs of the home. This person can help you to make the financial arrangements you need.

How long can I stay?

Your resident agreement should cover the circumstances in which you may have to leave. For example, if your care needs change significantly, and your aged care home cannot provide you with the care you require, it may be more appropriate for you to move to another aged care home. This will be discussed with you first.

How much personal privacy will I have?

Your right to privacy, dignity and confidentiality must be recognised and respected. Personal privacy is important and staff members must respect your wishes concerning your care and your belongings.

All aged care homes will have an area in which you can entertain your carer, your family and friends in privacy and with dignity. If you do not have your own room, you will be shown, or you can ask to be shown, where you will be able to meet people in this way. This may be a small sitting room, a screened off area or similar.

When you are finding an aged care home, you may wish to ask about each home's privacy policy and about private meeting spaces for residents.



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Will I be able to change my room?

If you want to change rooms, ask the manager of your aged care home, who must consider such requests. The manager will have to consider factors such as whether an alternative room is available, the effect a move will have on other people in the home, and the terms of your agreement. Generally, you can only be moved at your request and with your agreement.

Will I be able to change aged care homes?

If, for example, you have accepted a vacancy in an aged care home but it wasn't necessarily your preferred choice, you can apply for other aged care homes and move in once a vacancy arises.

How will my health and personal care be managed?

Once you have moved in, the aged care home should discuss your care needs and any other needs you may have, such as your medication, with you, your carer, family member or friend. Staff will develop a *care plan* for you to make sure that all the staff are made aware of your needs.

You, your carer, family member or friend may be involved in developing this care plan. If you already have a care plan that has been developed by a community nurse or your doctor, bring it with you when you move in. If needed, your care plan may cover ways of caring for dementia.

You are entitled to choose your own doctor. If your current doctor does not visit your aged care home, you will be assisted in choosing a suitable alternative. The aged care home will help you to access any health care services you need, whether this is a doctor or another health care professional.

How will I get to my medical or other appointments?

Your aged care home will help you to arrange transport to your appointments, if you need it. However, the aged care home does not have to pay for your transport. If making transport arrangements is difficult, the aged care home may be able to organise for your health care practitioner to visit you instead.



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What will happen to my private health insurance?

Private health insurance does not cover fees and charges for your aged care home. However, your private health insurance will cover you for some or all of the costs of being a private patient in either a public or private hospital, and for a range of other items not covered by Medicare.

What will the food be like?

Your aged care home should offer you a varied, healthy and well-balanced diet that takes into account individual preferences and medical needs. Your aged care home should also take into account your dietary customs according to religious or cultural beliefs.

You or your carer, family member or friend should tell the manager of your aged care home what kinds of food you require, to ensure that your needs are met.

What activities will be offered?

You will be encouraged and supported to participate in as many interests and activities as possible. Aged care homes run programs of activities, both internal and community-based, catering for many interests. These are planned and carried out with input from you, your family and the community.

Many aged care homes have activity officers or therapists who will discuss your hobbies and interests with you. That staff member will then work out how your hobbies and interests can be continued in your new environment, if possible. She or he may also offer you other activities.

Will I still be able to vote?

Yes. Your rights as a citizen do not change when you live in an aged care home.

Will my culture, language and religion be taken into account?

Yes. All aged care homes are required to provide care that is appropriate to your cultural beliefs and customs.

Your aged care home will acknowledge and respect your cultural identity. Your aged care home will also encourage and help you



move

to maintain your existing links with cultural, national or social communities, and to take part in the social life of those communities as much as you want to.

Your aged care home will make arrangements for a translator if you need help to explain your needs and preferences. You have the right to practise your own religion wherever you live. Some aged care homes have their own chapel or quiet room. Others have regular visits from clergy or can arrange transport to the religious establishment of your choice.

How can I participate in the way the home is run?

When living in residential aged care you have the opportunity for you or your carer, family member or friend to participate in the decisions about the services that you receive. If you would like to be involved, ask your aged care home about the processes that have been established to ensure that you can have input into decisions about services.

This may include a process of consultation between you and the aged care home to discuss your own care and choices, or a forum that expresses the views of residents.

What information am I entitled to request from the home?

When living in residential aged care you have the opportunity for you or your representative to request, at any time, the most recent statement of the service's audited accounts and your entry on the bond register. You must receive this information within 7 days of your request being made.

Can I spend time with family and friends?

You can leave your aged care home for up to 52 nights each year, whenever you want. This means that you can spend a night or nights with your carer, family or friends and you do not have to pay an additional fee. This is known as **social leave**. Your absence will only be counted as leave if you stay away overnight.

During this time, the Government will continue to pay the various subsidies associated with providing care to your aged care home. If you choose to take more leave than 52 nights, the Government will not pay a subsidy for that extra time, and your home may ask you to pay more.



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What if I have to go to hospital?

Time in hospital isn't counted as part of your social leave, but you will be asked to pay your normal fees and charges during this time.

What if I am feeling lonely?

The Community Visitors Scheme provides a regular friendly visiting scheme for people in aged care homes who are isolated or lonely. As well as benefiting the residents, the visitors provide another outside presence in the home and so help create a more open environment. Staff in your aged care home can help you to contact a community visitor if you wish to.

Aged care homes also identify residents who they think would benefit from the scheme.

Your family members or others may also approach the home if they think you would benefit from companionship. The home will then contact a Community Visitors Scheme coordinator, who will match you with a suitable community visitor, taking into account such things as shared interests, hobbies, and the similarity of your backgrounds.

What support is there for residents to exercise their rights?

Advocacy services help you to exercise your rights through a process that may include information, representation, advice and support to you, your carer, your family or your friends. This is an independent, confidential service provided free of charge in each State and Territory.

Advocacy services promote your rights and can increase your involvement in decision-making processes affecting your life. These services may play a critical role in supporting you through a complaint process and advising you of your rights in negotiations with providers.

To contact an advocacy service near you, please call **1800 700 600**.

How do I make a complaint?

If you have a problem with your aged care home that cannot be solved with the staff and management at the home, the **Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme** will help you make a complaint and find a solution. Run by the Department of Health and Ageing, the scheme provides a free and accessible complaint system.



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Anyone can make a complaint to the scheme about anything that may be a breach of an aged care home's responsibilities under the aged care legislation, and that affects a person who is, or was, receiving or eligible to receive Australian Government funded aged care services. Complaints can be made face to face, by telephone or in writing, and you can request that your complaint be kept confidential or anonymous.

You can contact the scheme either by phone on **1800 550 552** (free call) or by mail at the Aged Care Complaints Investigation Scheme, GPO Box 9848 in your capital city.

What is the Aged and Community Care Information Line?

The **Aged Care Information Line**, telephone **1800 500 853** (free call), is a single hotline number that provides you, your carer, your family or your friends with information on Australian Government funded residential aged care and community care.

The information line can also refer you to services in your region and one of 54 Commonwealth Carelink Centres around Australia.

What are Commonwealth Carelink Centres?

Commonwealth Carelink Centres offer a new way for all Australians to access information about community and other aged care services with a single phone call or a visit to a one-stop shopfront. The Centres act as a single point of contact, providing reliable information and guidance about community care services and aged care homes available in the local community.

Commonwealth Carelink Centres can provide information to older Australians, people with disabilities, their carers, family or friends, general practitioners, other health professionals and service providers or anyone else who may need this information. Anyone can use a Commonwealth Carelink Centre to access information, either by visiting a shopfront personally or by telephoning **1800 052 222** (free call).

Who can I contact for information about people with Dementia?

Alzheimers Australia is a consumer organisation that provides information, support, advocacy and education to people with dementia, family members and carers, as well as health professionals and the community.



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There is an *Alzheimers Association* in every State and Territory which can be contacted through the **Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500** (freecall) for anyone requiring support or assistance.

What help is there for Carers?



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Carers play an invaluable role in the community, providing practical support to family, friends and the people for whom they care.

It can be a confusing and distressing time for carers when the person they care for moves into an aged care home. No matter how difficult caring for another person may have been, a carer may now feel a sense of loss and disorientation as his or her role changes. Feelings of sadness, grief, guilt, anger, relief, self-doubt, isolation and frustration are all quite common feelings for carers to have. It may be useful to suggest that your carer, friend or family member speak to a counsellor or other supportive person to share their feelings about the experience.

Your carer, friend or family member may not wish to relinquish their caring role after you move into residential aged care, and the truth is that their role will never be replaced. Carers may still continue to be involved in practical tasks and the aged care home may be able to advise them on how to continue caring.

Carers Australia is the national peak body for carers, with member associations in each State and Territory.

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres are a part of the Carers Association in each State and Territory and provide carers with referral to services and practical written information to support them in their caring role.

The Australian Government provides the following assistance to help carers maintain their caring role:

- Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres

There is a **Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre** in the capital city of each State and Territory. Each centre can provide you with information about available assistance. This information may include details about financial support, or useful names and contact numbers.

These Centres can also give you details of support groups and service providers in your local areas. They can also provide counselling, emotional support, education and advocacy services. You can telephone **Commonwealth Carer Resource Centres on 1800 242 636** (free call).

- Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres

A network of 82 Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres across Australia focuses on helping carers with the many aspects of respite care, including the sometimes difficult decision to use respite care.

The centres do not provide direct respite care services. Instead, they will help you to understand the different types of respite care available, discuss the most appropriate form of respite for you, and work with you to arrange it.

In some circumstances, if you are unable to afford the cost of respite, the centres can help you pay. You can telephone **Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres on 1800 059 059** (freecall).

- Respite Care Services

Respite care can be arranged in the home of the carer, at a day centre or in an aged care home, although the availability of services may vary from region to region. For further information on respite services in your area, telephone your regional **Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre on 1800 059 059** (free call), *Carers Australia* or *Alzheimers Australia*.



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