



**Helping CALD older people
and their families to tell their stories**
to the Royal Commission
into Aged Care Quality and Safety

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Helping CALD older people and their families to tell their stories to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

PURPOSE

This toolkit is intended to help people working with or supporting older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, their families and carers to have conversations with them to explain:

- what the Royal Commission on Aged Care Quality and Safety is and how it does its work
- why it is important that the Royal Commission hears from CALD people about their experience of aged care services
- how to tell the Royal Commission about their experience **in their own language** (if that is their preference).

USING THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit includes suggested talking points for three separate conversations at different times. Depending on how well the first conversation goes, it could be appropriate to continue with the other conversations.

The talking points have been written in **simple English**.

They could also be used as prompts for conversations **in other languages**, using bilingual workers, volunteers, family or friends.

The toolkit can be used multiple times. Additional copies are available online at www.fecca.org.au or by phoning 02 6282 5755.

ABOUT FECCA

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) is the peak, national body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. FECCA's role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of its constituency to government, business and the broader community.

Acknowledgements

FECCA congratulates the Royal Commission for its determination to hear the voices of CALD older people, and for its decision to accept submissions in languages other than English. FECCA will advocate for this precedent to be adopted by future Royal Commissions or inquiries.

FECCA acknowledges:

- the valuable contribution and feedback of a significant number of individuals and organisations
- the input of staff of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety
- funding for this project from the Department of Health.



What is the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety?

In Australia, Royal Commissions are the highest level of investigation into issues that people are concerned about.

In recent years there have been increasing concerns about the quality and safety of aged care services in Australia (including home care and residential aged care).

In 2018 the Australian Government set up the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the Royal Commission).

The Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission set out the issues to be investigated, and require the Royal Commission to report on and make recommendations to the Government about these issues.

The Terms of Reference include several items of importance to CALD consumers of aged care services:

- a) the **quality** of aged care services provided to Australians, the extent to which those services **meet the needs** of the people accessing them, the extent of **substandard care** being provided, including **mistreatment** and all forms of **abuse**, the causes of any systemic failures, and any actions that should be taken in response.
- b) what the Australian Government, aged care industry, Australian families and the wider community can do to **strengthen the system** of aged care services to ensure that the services provided are of **high quality** and **safe**.
- c) how to ensure that aged care services are person-centred, including through allowing people to exercise greater choice, control and independence in relation to their care, and improving engagement with families and carers on care-related matters.

The full Terms of Reference are at <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/Pages/Terms-of-reference.aspx>.

The Royal Commission has provided information about its work in languages other than English: <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/about/Pages/other-languages.aspx>



How does the Royal Commission do its work?

The Royal Commission gathers information and ideas about improving aged care in a number of ways:

- **Submissions**

The Royal Commission wants people in the community to tell their stories about their experience of aged care (the difficulties, the good things and suggestions for improvement). This is called making a submission.

Individuals (including older people or their families/carers) and organisations may make submissions in writing, by telephone or by sending in a recording.

Submissions can be made in languages other than English.

The Royal Commission also gets information about aged care through:

- **Hearings** (organisations or individuals are asked to give evidence)
- **Roundtables** (the Royal Commission invites people with expert views to discuss specific issues)
- **Community forums** for members of the public.

The work of the Royal Commission will finish when they provide a final report to the Government. The report will say what they have found out about aged care in Australia and make recommendations for improvements to the system.

KEY DATES

The closing date for submissions is 30 April 2020.

The final report of the Royal Commission is due by 12 November 2020.



Why is it important for the Royal Commission to hear from CALD people?

The Royal Commission Terms of Reference include a requirement that consideration is given to ***“the wide diversity of older Australians and the barriers they face in accessing and receiving high quality aged care services”***.

FECCA wrote to the Royal Commission to highlight the importance of the Commission hearing of the experiences of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and to ask what language services would be available to people who do not speak English well to assist them engaging with or making submissions to the Commission.

FECCA told the Royal Commission that, for cultural reasons, many CALD people will need to be encouraged actively to participate in this process. In addition, there are significant language barriers for many people in finding and using aged care services (including residential care or home care packages).

The Royal Commission agreed to accept submissions in languages other than English (by telephone, in writing, or a recording). The Royal Commission will arrange and pay for interpreters or translators to give them an English version. **There will be no cost to people making submissions in languages other than English.**

Common issues for older CALD people in finding and using aged care services

All older Australians share many common preferences for ageing well, but older CALD Australians can face circumstances that are different to those of other older Australians. This can impact on the ageing experience itself, and on access to and use of services.

These include:

- **Cultural barriers**

CALD older people experience a number of cultural barriers that prevent them from accessing and effectively using aged care services. These might include: attitudes to family and caring responsibilities; communication difficulties related to English language proficiency; and particular beliefs, behaviours and preferences that are not well understood by the non-CALD population.

They may have gender preferences, certain views regarding the role of women, concerns about privacy, a mistrust of authority figures, or difficulty in expressing their needs if English is not their main language. In addition, many elderly migrants can struggle to adapt to a foreign environment outside of their home, particularly if the facility does not cater to their specific culture or language group. This can then have a profoundly negative impact on their health and wellbeing.



- **Structural Barriers**

Many people find it difficult to understand the complex Australian aged care system and this can be even more difficult for a person from a CALD background. In addition, many people are not aware of the availability of services or where to go for more information. Where information does exist, it may not be in their language or marketed appropriately. As a result, CALD people might not utilise services that would otherwise contribute to their positive health outcomes.

- **Service Barriers**

Where aged care services are provided, they may not be culturally appropriate for CALD consumers. In addition, care staff may not be culturally competent or reflect the cultural diversity of the broader Australian population. Staff turnover may mean that CALD consumers find it difficult to develop trust or build rapport with staff. CALD consumers may experience racism or discrimination, which may be compounded by a perception that CALD consumers pose additional costs and extra work. Some service providers do not know how to use translators and interpreters, or simply decide not to.

- **Other Barriers**

Older CALD people face further issues that can contribute to poor health and wellbeing outcomes:

- dementia resulting in the loss of English language skills and reversion to the preferred original language
- post-traumatic stress disorder (particularly among refugees and asylum seekers)
- loss of culture and intergenerational culture change
- isolation and fewer peers.

FECCA believes that the best way for the Royal Commission to understand the issues faced by older CALD people and their families in accessing and using aged care services, is to hear from these people themselves.

We do know that many CALD people, often for cultural reasons, may:

- find it difficult to use feedback or complaints mechanisms, or
- be reluctant or fearful to engage in formal, complicated processes such as this Royal Commission.

This toolkit aims to assist CALD people in telling their stories to the Royal Commission.



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