

# TOWARDS A CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE AGED CARE SYSTEM

## PROVIDERS CAN TAP INTO A NATIONAL PROGRAM



**P**eople from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds make up approximately a third of our older population, however, they are not a homogenous group. Each person is characterised by a unique identity which is influenced by life experiences and social, cultural, educational, economic and health determinants.

Culture, religion and migration experiences naturally shape the way people think and act. For example, people who were forced to leave their home country due to political persecution, often lack trust in government institutions and government-related services.

The Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care Alliance (PICAC Alliance) is a national program funded by the Australian Department of Health to support aged care providers to deliver culturally appropriate care. It welcomes the Federal Government's aged care budget which proposes a roadmap to ensure safer and better quality care for older Australians. One of the directions of the budget is the compilation of a new Aged Care Act which places human rights principles at the centre of governance and service delivery.

The PICAC Alliance has spoken on a number of occasions about the importance of incorporating the cultural, linguistic, and spiritual needs and preferences of older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds into the new Aged Care Act and that the human rights principles of the Act, such as the fundamental right to speak in one's first language, are translated into everyday practice within the delivery of age services.

The PICAC Alliance recommends embedding inclusive service models and delivery into the heart of the organisation and that responding to the needs of all older, diverse people is deemed essential in delivering quality and equitable care.

The PICAC Alliance acknowledges the Federal Government's major investment into translating and interpreting services to help culturally and linguistically diverse older people to access and navigate the aged care system. The PICAC Alliance further applauds the proposed implementation of the *Specialist Verification Program*, which will certify providers who offer specific services directed at diverse consumers. This program is intended to make specialist providers more accessible to these consumers, their families, carers and advocates.

With the profile and preferences of consumers becoming increasingly diverse, aged care services and programs will need to more appropriately reflect this consumer diversity.

It is key that organisations have access to targeted support and training in relation to culturally inclusive governance and service delivery.

The PICAC Alliance supports aged care providers across Australia to develop culturally inclusive care across all levels of their organisations. The Federal Government also supports this notion through its *Aged Care Diversity Framework*. Launched in 2017, the framework highlights the need to strategically support older people with diverse characteristics.

The Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing, the PICAC Victorian provider, complemented the government's approach to diversity and inclusion through the creation of its [Inclusive Service Standards](#), which provide a strategic framework for services to adapt and improve their services and organisational practices so they are welcoming, safe and accessible.

To complement this framework, more resources are needed to give providers the necessary support, and further work is required to ensure the delivery of inclusive care.

Inclusive care is a concept and practice that is well developed in Australia due to the commitment by successive governments to multiculturalism, the principles of access and equity, and our culturally diverse older population.

As a country, we have the unique opportunity to continue this journey towards a culturally inclusive world-class aged care system.

The [PICAC Alliance](#) organisations and their resources, training and tailored supports have been instrumental in paving the way for inclusive care practices across Australia and supporting aged care providers on that journey.

The PICAC Alliance looks forward to continuing to support aged care service providers, and the wider aged care sector to journey towards a more inclusive aged care system.

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