

# Good info matters

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**If you or someone you care about is navigating the aged care system, you might have noticed how complicated it can be. This is especially true for seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, where language or cultural differences can make it even harder to access the right support.**

That is why PICAC NT created the Caring for CALD Seniors Toolkit ([www.cotant.org.au/picac/caring-for-cald-seniors-toolkit](http://www.cotant.org.au/picac/caring-for-cald-seniors-toolkit)).

The toolkit is designed to help aged care providers better support CALD seniors. It includes practical suggestions, like using translated signage and feedback forms, working with interpreters and making information easier to understand. It also encourages services to plan ahead by learning more about the communities they care for and making sure cultural needs are respected from the start.

This Caring for CALD seniors toolkit was thought to be so valuable that a version specific to Western Australia has now been developed in collaboration with the PICAC WA team. This tailored version reflects the local aged care environment while keeping the toolkit's core aim the same: to help services offer respectful and culturally inclusive care that works for everyone.

These resources are particularly important right now. Soon, the new Aged Care Act will come into effect, along with the Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards.

These changes are part of a major reform of the system, aimed at making aged care safer, more transparent and more respectful of older people and their individual needs.

These new Standards were not developed overnight. In 2021, the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommended that the government review and improve the existing Standards. They called for stronger focus on food and nutrition, dementia care, diversity, clinical care and governance.

Since then, the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing has consulted widely and released a revised version of the Standards in early 2025. These reflect the new legislation and aim to make expectations clearer for both aged care providers and consumers.

One of the most important changes is Standard 6, which focuses entirely on food and nutrition. This is something that really matters. Food is not just about meeting dietary requirements. It is also about enjoyment, identity, and connection. A familiar meal can bring comfort. It can remind someone of home, of family, of special moments and traditions. For many older people, especially those from CALD backgrounds, food is deeply connected to memory and culture. The aroma of a childhood dish, the texture of a homemade soup, or the ritual of shared meals can bring peace and connection in a care environment that might otherwise feel foreign or isolating.

But it is not just the food itself. The dining experience matters too. Mealtimes are often the social heart of the day in residential care. They are moments when people come together, connect, and enjoy not just what is on their plate, but also the company and the setting around them. A noisy, rushed, or impersonal dining space can turn meals into a stressful event, especially for those with cognitive decline, sensory issues, or who are unfamiliar with the food being served. On the other hand, a calm, welcoming space with thoughtful seating,

good lighting and culturally appropriate table settings can make meals feel more like home.

This is why it is so important for aged care services to listen to the voices of residents and their families when it comes to food and dining. That is why the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has developed many resources for the older people and for the providers including a guide to help aged care services run food focus groups. These are simple sessions where residents, families, and staff come together to talk about food, share feedback, and make suggestions. This is a very practical way for providers to improve meals and create a more inclusive dining experience.



You can find the Food Focus Group guide here:

[www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/setting-food-focus-group](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/resource-library/setting-food-focus-group)

Through the PICAC program, COTA NT supports providers and community members by sharing tools and resources that make a real difference. The Caring for CALD Seniors Toolkit is just one of the ways we do this. If you would like a copy or want to learn more, we would be happy to help.

Because aged care should never be one size fits all. It should reflect who we are, where we come from and what matters most to us, including what is on our plate.

**PICAC NT**  
Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care

The PICAC program has supported aged care service providers and culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities in the NT since 1997. It aims to improve partnerships between aged care providers, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and the Commonwealth Department of Health.

Through PICAC, service providers, seniors in CaLD communities and government agencies **ENGAGE** with each other. PICAC's activities and events bring migrant and ethnic seniors together and its advocacy helps ensure the needs of seniors from CaLD backgrounds are being identified and met.

Do you need **SUPPORT** to ensure your services are culturally appropriate to your clients?  
Do you need help to get the aged care you need for yourself, friends or family members?  
PICAC can **HELP**.

Contact the PICAC Manager Cecilia Chiolero for help with:

- Culturally appropriate aged care training for service providers
- Free access to information and resources 'in-language'
- Concerns and issues affecting CaLD seniors
- Support to access translation services
- Community orientated information sessions
- Informative activities in language.

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