



# Dementia care

The Royal Commission found that despite the prevalence of dementia amongst older people needing care, it was often overlooked, misunderstood or poorly supported in aged care. To date, government action to drive improvements in dementia care has been limited.

## What has happened so far?

- A comprehensive range of new training modules have been created to help workers better support people with complex care needs, including dementia. However, contrary to the Royal Commission, there is no mandatory requirement to undertake dementia training. This is critically important to reducing and eliminating restrictive practices, often used in response to the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, with little proper understanding of human rights aligned responses and causation.
- Short term and emergency respite care for people with dementia remains largely inaccessible. This then limits the capacity of family and loved ones to continue providing care for people with dementia, increasing the likelihood of premature entry into residential aged care.
- The government is halving the total care management fees home care providers can claim, which will likely reduce the amount of time they can spend helping clients coordinate complex care needs. This could particularly impact people living with dementia who need:
  - more time to understand assessment results and service access and availability, and
  - tailored support and clear communication.

## What needs to change?

1. To align with the Royal Commission's vision and improve outcomes for people living with dementia, the Inspector-General of Aged Care calls on the government to:
  - Mandate trauma-informed, dementia-specific training for all workers.
  - Increase incentives for providers to make respite care more accessible and flexible, especially emergency respite care.
  - Place greater emphasis on reducing, and where possible, eliminating the use of restrictive practices.
2. Increased care management support for people with complex needs, such as dementia.