



## 2025 Progress Report

Implementation of the Recommendations of the  
Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

# First Nations Aged Care Commissioner

The Royal Commission called for a statutory Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner to oversee service delivery of aged care for elders and foster the development of culturally safe, tailored and flexible aged care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## The Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner

Ms Andrea Kelly, a proud Warumungu and Larrakia woman, was appointed as Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner and commenced in the role on 8 January 2024. As Interim Commissioner, Ms Kelly has undertaken a range of functions including:

- leading extensive public consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and communities about the design and functions of the permanent Commissioner and understanding older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' experiences in and with the aged care system
- providing advice to the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the department) based on feedback received, and contributing to the changes necessary to bring improvements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all tiers of the aged care system, and
- advocating for, and promoting culturally safe aged care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia.

Ms Kelly recommended the permanent Commissioner be established as a permanent statutory position, independent from government. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people consulted by Ms Kelly strongly opposed incorporating the permanent Commissioner within the department due to the ways in which it would compromise independence. This same message was reinforced to the Inspector-General by multiple stakeholders (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) across her reporting process, and in the time since.

The Inspector-General strongly supports the interim Commissioner's recommendation, recognising full independence is vital, and the model Ms Kelly has put forward will achieve that. Given the immediate and foreseeable risks and concerns raised by the Inspector-General regarding the mainstreaming of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aged care, the urgency and independence of the role is ever more pressing.

## 10 Year Transformation Plan

In February 2025, the Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner called on the government to 'commit to co-designing and developing in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a 10-year transformation plan'.

The transformation plan articulates how it will:

- make the necessary transformational reform needed in the aged care sector
- embed the priority reforms outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap into the plan, and
- ensure the system can respond to the needs of older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now and into the future.

The approach within the transformation plan closely aligns with the intent and detail of the Royal Commission's recommendations.

The Inspector-General sees it as imperative that the government to commit to the Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner's call to co-design and develop a 10-year aged care transformation plan in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This plan differs substantially from the Government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework. While the framework 'establishes a 2035 vision for older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to age well', it lacks any sense of a pathway or plan as to how that vision would be achieved.

**The government needs to adopt the transformation plan to drive the systemic change that both the Royal Commission and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people view as imperative.**