

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council

2025 Federal Election Statement

April 2025



NATSIAACC



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and Aged Care Council



Acknowledgement

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council acknowledges that we are based on the lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri People, and we acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country and Island Home throughout Australia on which our Members work and their connections to land, sea and Community.

NATSIAACC pays our respects to Elders past and present who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country and Island Home, and Community.

About NATSIAACC

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council (NATSIAACC) is the national peak body representing both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care providers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People and their respective Communities. NATSIAACC represents 50 Members who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care providers, or who have an interest in providing Aged Care services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. NATSIAACC is also a member of the Coalition of Peak organisations who work with Government on the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

To contact NATSIAACC, please email info@natsiaacc.org.au



2025 Federal Election Statement

As we approach the 2025 Federal Election on 3 May, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council (**'NATSIAACC'**) calls on all political parties and candidates to commit to policies that ensure culturally safe, accessible, and high-quality Aged Care for our Elders and Older People. Our Elders and Older People are the knowledge holders, community leaders, and cultural custodians of our people. They deserve dignity, respect, and the right to age on Country and/or Island Home with the supports they need.

The next Federal Government must take decisive action to implement the commitments outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, particularly Target 7, which aims to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing culturally safe Aged Care services. Furthermore, the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the Interim Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner's report, most notably the 26 time sensitive recommendations made in the report in Appendix 1, must be fully implemented to address systemic failures and improve Aged Care outcomes for our Communities.

Whilst we acknowledge the announcement from federal Treasury of \$47.6 million over four years from 2025–2026 – with an additional \$12.7 million in 2029–2030 in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care, and the \$1.1 million over five years from 2024-2025 with an additional \$0.3 million per year ongoing for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program and Multi-Purpose Services Program, there is still deficits in the sector that need serious attention from all political parties.

We urge the next federal government to prioritise the following areas within the Aged Care sector for action:

Access & Equity
Cultural Safety
Data Sovereignty
Digital & Transport Access

NATSIAACC Asks

Funding & Policy Reform
Housing & Infrastructure
Wellbeing & Support
Workforce, Development & Training



1. Access and Equity

NATSIAACC asks the next Government to ensure all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People, regardless of location, have equitable access to Aged Care services that are culturally appropriate and responsive to their needs.

We can work to improve access and equity by:

- Ensuring culturally safe and community-led Aged Care services are delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People in urban, rural, and remote areas.
- Increase funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled Aged Care providers for sustainability and the move towards self-determination.
- Improve access to home care services in rural and remote areas across the country.

2. Cultural Safety

NATSIAACC and our Members need to see that cultural safety principles are embedded in all Aged Care policies, funding agreements, and service delivery models to ensure Elders and Older People receive care that respects their identity and traditions as per Royal Commission's recommendation 48.

NATSIAACC would like to ask for:

- Mandatory cultural safety and trauma-informed care training for all Aged Care workers in all workplaces.
- Recognition of kinship systems allowing Elders and Older People to be provided services by extended family.
- The Aged Care sector to adopt and implement NATSIAACC's Cultural Safety Definition.
- Establish a permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner as an independent statutory role to lead system change, monitor outcomes and promote equity in line with the Royal Commission's recommendation 49 and recommendation 3 of the Interim Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner's report.
- Recognise NATSIAACC as the most authoritative voice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care as aligned with Priority Reform 1 of the National Agreement.

3. Data Sovereignty

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities need to have ownership and control over data collection, governance, and use in Aged Care policy and service planning.

To drive for self-determination, NATSIAACC asks for:

- Empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities by providing access to location-specific data, enabling informed decision-making and fostering local place-based solutions for the Aged Care sector, in alignment with Priority Reform Four of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples being the holder of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data including the approaches to collect, store, and analyse relevant data.
- Increase the amount of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care data being collected, used and reported.
- Ensure that all data which includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has gone through the relevant ethics approval through Human Research Ethics Committees at a state/territory and national level.



4. Digital and Transport Access for Elders and Older People

As we move to a more digital and mobile culture, NATSIAACC asks for improving access to digital technology and transport services to ensure Elders and Older People can connect with Aged Care providers, family, and support networks, regardless of location.

NATSIAACC asks for:

- Subsidised technology programs to help Elders and Older People access telehealth, banking, government services and staying connected with family, friends, and Communities when off Country and/or Island Home.
- Funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led providers to enable Elders and Older People to have access to technology.
- Better transport services so Elders and Older People can access healthcare, Community events, and support networks.
- Funding for local transport solutions in rural and remote Communities, such as community-run shuttle services.

5. Funding and Policy Reform

Reform Aged Care funding models to prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led services, ensuring sustainable, community-controlled Aged Care solutions has been asked for numerous times. NATSIAACC is advocating for the reform to not be put off any longer.

NATSIAACC asks that there be:

- Increase government funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Aged Care services through non-competitive funding opportunities.
- Provide support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care services when applying for funding through non-competitive and competitive processes.
- Quarantine large amounts of funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led Aged Care services to enable providers the ability to provide care that our Elders and Older People deserve in alignment with the Royal Commission's recommendation 52.
- Recognition of informal carers (family members) within financial and support services.
- Develop the 10-year transformation plan, co-designed with NATSIAACC, as per recommendation 2 of the Interim Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner's report.

6. Housing and Infrastructure

There needs to be investment in safe, appropriate housing and Aged Care infrastructure, particularly in remote and regional Communities, to support Elders and Older People to remain connected to Country and/or Island Home and Community that is in alignment with the Royal Commission's recommendation 53.

NATSIAACC asks candidates to:

- Address housing and social determinants impacting ageing.
- Government investment in Elder and Older People friendly housing, especially in rural and remote Communities.
- Ageing-in-place initiatives to keep Elders and Older People on Country and/or Island Home in their communities with their families.
- Retro-fitting existing homes with accessibility modifications to accommodate ageing needs, and that these modifications be subsidised.
- Government investment in an increase in Residential Aged Care Facilities in urban, rural, remote and very remote areas throughout Australia.
- Government investment in an increase of Aged Care Services throughout Australia to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People culturally safe care on Country and/or Island Home.



7. Wellbeing and Support for Elders and Older People

We want to prioritise holistic approaches that integrate Aged Care with health, mental health, and social wellbeing programs to enhance Elders and Older Peoples' quality of life.

NATSIAACC asks for the following improvements from the next Federal Government:

- Expand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, suicide prevention programs, and social support services for Elders and Older People dealing with isolation and intergenerational trauma.
- Stronger integration of Aged Care with primary health care services to improve preventative care.
- Increase or gain access to specialist geriatric services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including dementia and chronic disease care.
- Ensure that palliative and end-of-life care aligns with cultural traditions and beliefs.

8. Workforce, Development and Training

NATSIAACC asks to strengthen training, career pathways, and retention strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care workers, ensuring a skilled and culturally competent workforce.

Actions are to:

- Increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care workers by co-designing with NATSIAACC an Aged Care Workforce strategy, in alignment with the Royal Commission's recommendation 51.
- Increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care career pathways in alignment with the Royal Commission's recommendation 47.
- Ensure fair wages and better working conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care workers.
- Increase employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers and ensure they have the appropriate training and support.
- Increase funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led training programs through community-controlled Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care workforce.

NATSIAACC stands ready to work with all levels of Government to co-design and implement solutions that uphold the rights of our Elders and Older People. We call on all candidates to listen to our Communities and take meaningful action to ensure our Elders and Older People are supported now and in the future. We urge all political parties and candidates to demonstrate their commitment to the National Agreement, the Interim Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner's recommendations, and the Royal Commission's recommendations by supporting this election statement. Failure to act will send a clear message that the wellbeing and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People are not a national priority.

We trust that the next Federal Government will choose to walk with us in genuine partnership to ensure these reforms are implemented with the integrity, urgency, and accountability that our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People deserve.

We encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities, allies, and stakeholders to engage in the 2025 Federal Election and advocate for policies that will bring real change to our Elders and Older People.



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