



NATSIAACC

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Ageing and Aged Care Council

The Math Ain't Mathin: What We Heard and Why It Matters

The National Press Club address by the Office of the Inspector-General of Aged Care, Natalie Siegel-Brown was a significant moment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care.

Throughout her address, the Office of Inspector-General of Aged Care consistently embedded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the broader discussion about Aged Care reform. Rather than treating First Nations issues as a separate conversation, she recognised that improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People is fundamental to building a stronger Aged Care system for everyone.

For NATSIAACC, as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care, many of the themes raised were not new. They reflect priorities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Elders, Older People, Aged Care providers and NATSIAACC have consistently advanced through national advocacy, Government engagement and our role as the national steward for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care.

The Inspector-General of Aged Care provided independent recognition that these priorities are fundamental to achieving an equitable, culturally safe and sustainable Aged Care system, reinforcing the evidence already before Government as implementation continues.

National Press Club: Areas of Alignment



**Front Door Access
to Aged Care**



**Person-Centred,
Culturally Safe
Care**



**Strengthening
Aboriginal
Community
Controlled
Service Delivery**



**Fair and
Equitable
Reform**



**First Nations
Leadership and
Partnership**

Areas of Alignment

Front Door Access to Aged Care

National Press Club Message:

- Systems should be designed around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples rather than expecting people to fit mainstream models.
- Delayed access to culturally safe care results in poorer health, greater complexity and higher costs.
- Prevention and earlier intervention improve outcomes for older people while delivering better value for the Aged Care system.
- Access should reflect people's lived realities rather than administrative processes.

NATSIAACC Policy Position:

- A dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Pathway that enables earlier access to services.
- Earlier access to culturally safe assessment, navigation and care.
- Strengthening the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) services as a critical safety net for prevention, early intervention and ageing well at home.
- Reducing barriers that delay or discourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People from accessing Aged Care.

Person-Centred, Culturally Safe Care

National Press Club Message:

- Equitable care cannot be achieved through mainstream approaches alone.
- Care should be designed around dignity, independence, connection and relationships rather than transactional service delivery.
- People should not be priced out of the care they need.

NATSIAACC Policy Position:

- Cultural safety woven throughout an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Pathway.
- Person-centred care designed around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of wellbeing, connection and self-determination.
- Affordable, equitable access to culturally safe care without financial barriers.

Strengthening Aboriginal Community Controlled Service Delivery

National Press Club Message:

- Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations providers are critical to achieving equitable outcomes.
- Thin and remote markets require different policy responses.
- Community-based supports are essential to helping people remain living independently in their homes and communities.

NATSIAACC Policy Position:

- Strengthening Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Aged Care providers as the preferred providers of culturally safe care,
- Sustainable investment that supports Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Aged Care providers to grow and thrive.
- Addressing the unique challenges of thin, rural and remote markets through place-based solutions.

Fair and Equitable Reform**National Press Club Message:**

- Counting Stolen Generations Redress payments in means testing is inconsistent with a person-centred system.
- Successful implementation, not simply policy announcements is what ultimately matters.
- Reform should be grounded in evidence and lived experience, not short-term or politically convenient solutions.

NATSIAACC Policy Position:

- Removing financial barriers that prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People from accessing care, including exempting Redress payments from Aged Care means and asset testing for both Support at Home and Residential Aged Care.
- Measuring reform through outcomes experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People rather than system outputs.

First Nations Leadership and Partnership**National Press Club Message:**

- Lived experience should inform reform from design through implementation.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices must remain central to decision-making.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives should be embedded throughout Aged Care reform, not treated as separate or peripheral considerations.

NATSIAACC Policy Position:

- Genuine partnership and co-design across policy, implementation and evaluation.
- Strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and decision-making across the Aged Care system.
- Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices throughout the design, delivery and accountability of Aged Care reform.

From Recognition to Implementation

The Office of The Inspector-General of Aged Care, Natalie Siegel-Brown reinforced what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Aged Care providers and NATSIAACC have consistently said over years of Aged Care reform consultation: meaningful reform requires culturally safe systems, genuine First Nations leadership and implementation that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led decision making to deliver better outcomes for Elders and Older People.

The address also reinforced that investing in prevention, early intervention and ageing well at home is both the right outcome for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People and the most sustainable path for the future of the Aged Care system echoing prevention that Aboriginal Community Control has long held as crucial.

NATSIAACC, as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care, believes the evidence for reform already exists. The challenge now is implementation. Success will not be measured by policies announced or further reports produced, but by whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People experience earlier access to culturally safe care, stronger Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Aged Care providers, greater choice and control, and the opportunity to age with dignity, connected to culture, family, community and Country or Island Home.

“She (Inspector-General of Aged Care) brilliantly wove Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care perspectives throughout her address, embedding them into her analysis of the challenges facing the system...”

- Kim Whiteley, CEO, NATSIAACC

The Math Ain't Mathin, National Press Club Address, 15 July 2026

Thank you, Natalie Siegel-Brown

While your work has spanned the entire Aged Care system, NATSIAACC deeply appreciates the way you consistently recognised and articulated the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People, and the vital role of Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Aged Care Providers. Throughout your '*The Math Ain't Mathin*' address, you reinforced that equitable Aged Care cannot be achieved through mainstream solutions alone, but by designing systems that genuinely respond to the lived experiences, priorities and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People.

Your address reflected many of the priorities NATSIAACC, as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care, has consistently advocated for on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, Older People and providers. You reinforced the importance of designing Aged Care around lived experience rather than administrative processes, ensuring people are not priced out of culturally safe care, recognising the critical role of Aboriginal Community Controlled and First Nations Aged Care providers, and investing in earlier support to keep Elders and Older People connected to culture, family, community and Country or Island Home. These are fundamental to achieving equitable outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and strengthening the sustainability of the Aged Care system.

We particularly appreciated your recognition that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People cannot access culturally safe support early, they often enter the Aged Care system later, with poorer health, greater complexity and fewer opportunities to age well on their own terms; outcomes that are preventable for both individuals and the broader system. Your acknowledgement of the realities facing thin and remote markets, your recognition that counting Redress payments in means testing is inconsistent with a person-centred system, and your call for lived experience to shape reform from design through to implementation, reflected many of the issues NATSIAACC continues to advocate for.

Thank you for your partnership, your authenticity and your commitment to an Aged Care system that places people before process and outcomes before bureaucracy. Your leadership has reinforced that when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are genuinely heard and acted upon, the Aged Care system is stronger for everyone. We wish you every success in the next chapter.

MEDIA INQUIRIES: Sam Harding, samh@natsiaacc.org.au