

NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER AGEING AND AGED CARE CONFERENCE

AGEING OUR WAY THROUGH CULTURE, CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY



PROGRAM
2026



NATSIAACC

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Ageing and Aged Care Council

Theme: Truth, Reform and Community Realities

TIME	PROGRAM
8:00am	Registration and Community Gathering On arrival, tea and coffee will be available.
8:30am	Smoking Ceremony Experience a smoking ceremony and walk through the smoke into the conference venue to begin our 2-day conference.
9:00am	MC Welcome Welcome and conference framing.
9:05am	Welcome to Country Presented by traditional Ngunnawal Custodian.
9:15am	Cultural Performance Opening cultural performance grounding delegates in culture, connection and community.
9:30am	Chair Opening Address National leadership reflections and conference purpose.
9:40am	CEO Address Positioning the conference as a national First Nations-led gathering.
9:50am	Ministerial Address Government reflections on reform and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care.
10:05am	Panel What Communities Are Telling Us Families, workforce and communities experience the Aged Care system from different perspectives. This conversation brings those voices together to share what Elders and Older People are experiencing when seeking and receiving care, and what those experiences tell us about where the system needs to listen and respond differently.
10:30am	Morning Tea
11:00am	Panel Reform to Reality: One Year into Change Across communities, people are still asking whether reform is making Aged Care easier, safer and more connected for Elders and Older People. This session brings reform back to its purpose: what has actually changed for Elders, Older People, families and communities, where expectations have not yet been met, and what must remain in focus as implementation continues.
11:40am	Speaker Strength Through Culture and Community Care has always existed within family, community and culture. Through personal storytelling and reflection, this session celebrates the relationships, humour, cultural knowledge and community strength that support Elders and Older People to age well, reminding us that care is about much more than services alone.
12:00pm	Panel Ageing in Urban, Regional, Rural, Remote and Thin Market Communities Where Elders and Older People live shapes how Aged Care is accessed and delivered. Providers will share their experiences across urban, regional, rural and remote communities, the realities of delivering care in different settings, and the initiatives they have developed in response. The conversation will give delegates practical insight into how place, community and local conditions shape different approaches to care.
12:30pm	Lunch

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1:30pm	Panel Navigating Care with Trust, Dignity and Advocacy For many Elders and Older People, the first challenge is knowing where to start. This session follows the experience of navigating assessment, My Aged Care, advocacy and support, examining where trust is built or lost and what a culturally safe pathway through the system should feel like from the perspective of an Elder or Older Person.
2:10pm	Speaker Community-Led Solutions in Action Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled organisations are designing care around the needs of their own communities. Through real examples, this session showcases solutions developed on the ground, the cultural and service responsibilities these organisations carry, and what their experience can teach the broader sector about designing care around community rather than expecting community to fit the system.
2:30pm	Panel Why This Work Matters: A Family's Journey Through Care Behind every policy, program and service is an Elder or Older Person, family and community experiencing its impact. Through personal storytelling, this session follows a family's journey through care and the moments that made a difference, positively or negatively, bringing the conversation back to what dignity, culture, connection and good care mean in people's lives.
3:00pm	Afternoon Tea and Melbourne Cup Gathering
3:30pm	Panel Workforce, Leadership and Sustainability We know the workforce pressures facing Aged Care. This conversation hears from organisations and leaders building the workforce differently. It will examine the cultural load carried by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, approaches to growing and retaining workforce, and how stronger First Nations leadership and career pathways can change the future of the sector.
4:05pm	Panel Who Owns the Story? Data, Evidence and Accountability Data influences what governments see, what gets funded and how success is measured. This session asks whose knowledge counts, who controls the story told by the data, and whether current evidence reflects what Elders, Older People and communities say matters. It will challenge delegates to think differently about Indigenous Data Sovereignty, community ownership and how outcomes should be understood and measured.
4:25pm	Panel Truth-Telling and System Accountability Communities have raised many of the same concerns for years. This leadership conversation asks a harder question: when the evidence and community voices are clear, what prevents systems from changing? Senior system leaders will reflect on their responsibilities, where accountability sits and what must be different if reform is to translate into better outcomes for Elders and Older People.
5:10pm	Day One Reflections, Connection and Closing Gathering
5:15pm	Community Connection Gathering Delegates are invited to join us in connection, conversation and informal yarning.

Theme: Healing, Leadership and Future Generations

TIME	PROGRAM
8:30am	Arrival and Morning Gathering On arrival, tea and coffee will be available.
9:00am	Welcome Scene setting and Day 2 framing.
9:05am	Acknowledgement of Country
9:10am	Cultural Performance Opening cultural performance.
9:25am	Panel Community Control as Care: Honouring Our Past, Shaping Our Future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have always led their own solutions for caring for Elders and Older People. This conversation traces the strength and legacy of Community Control, what it makes possible for Elders and communities, and why the future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care must be grounded in community leadership, self-determination and Community Controlled delivery.
10:10am	Panel Culture, Dignity and Belonging Ageing well is about more than receiving services and supports. This reflection considers what it means to remain connected to identity, family, culture and community throughout the ageing journey, and why dignity and belonging must be understood as fundamental to good care rather than an addition to it.
10:30am	Morning Tea
11:00am	Panel Healing, Memory, Culture and Care Trauma, racism, grief, loss and disconnection can continue to shape people's experiences as they age. This conversation brings together perspectives across healing, dementia, grief and palliative care to consider how culture, memory, family and community can remain sources of identity, strength and healing throughout changing care needs.
11:40am	Speaker Conversation with Community Leadership Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People continue to carry culture, knowledge and leadership within communities. This conversation will reflect on the national priorities affecting Elders and Older People, the role of First Nations leadership in shaping government responses, and what stronger outcomes should look like for communities.
12:00pm	Open Yarn Healing, Care and Community Delegates are invited into the conversation to reflect on what they have heard throughout the morning, share their own knowledge and experience, and consider what the discussion means for the way care is designed and delivered in their own communities and organisations.
12:30pm	Lunch

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TIME	PROGRAM
1:30pm	Panel Elders Voices: What Does Ageing our Way Mean? This session centres the voices of Elders and Older People as they share stories, reflections and hopes for the future. Through lived experience, truth-telling and cultural reflection, they will share what ageing our way means to them, what they value and expect from Aged Care, and what they want future generations to protect and carry forward through culture, connection, community, dignity and self-determination.
2:20pm	Panel Future Generations: Leadership, Workforce and Cultural Continuity The next generation will inherit responsibility for caring for Elders and carrying culture, knowledge and leadership forward. Through the voices of emerging leaders and workforce, this session explores what draws younger people into Ageing and Aged Care, what will keep them there and how intergenerational knowledge and cultural continuity can strengthen the future workforce.
2:50pm	Speaker Knowledge into Practice: Supporting Community-Led Ageing and Aged Care Evidence has greatest value when communities can use it. This session demonstrates how research, knowledge and practical tools can be translated into better practice, giving delegates tangible examples of how evidence can strengthen and support culturally safe, community-led Ageing and Aged Care.
3:10pm	Afternoon Tea
3:40pm	Panel Looking Forward: National Priorities and Collective Action Leaders will reflect on the priorities that require national attention, where First Nations leadership must be strengthened, and the responsibilities different parts of the system must carry to translate discussion into action.
4:20pm	Speaker Conference Closing Reflections and Shared Commitments Forward The Conference closes by bringing together the key reflections, priorities and challenges heard across the two days. These will inform NATSIAACC's post-conference Reflections Paper and ongoing national advocacy, carrying the voices and priorities shared at the Conference forward into the work that follows.
4:30pm	End of Proceedings



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You can find more information at:



www.natsiaacc.org.au



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