



# NATSIAACC

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander  
Ageing and Aged Care Council



## RECOGNITION OF IAT FAILURES MUST NOW LEAD TO ACTION

NATSIAACC, the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care, welcomes the Senate's recognition of the significant deficiencies of the Integrated Assessment Tool (IAT) and the need for action to address them.

NATSIAACC has consistently raised that the problems with the IAT are not simply implementation issues. They reflect a failure in national system design. Those system failures affect Elders and Older People across Australia. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People, however, they can compound existing inequities because our people do not enter the Aged Care system from the same starting point.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People, there is an additional concern. The IAT and the methodology through which assessments are undertaken do not adequately recognise the cultural dimensions necessary to understand a person's needs and provide dignified, culturally safe care. Culture, kinship, family and community circumstances, connection to Country or Island Home and cultural obligations cannot always be understood through a standardised assessment process, particularly where assessments may be undertaken remotely or over the telephone.

NATSIAACC CEO Kim Whiteley said the Senate's recognition is important, but its value will be determined by what happens next.

"Recognising the failures of the IAT is one thing. The real test is what Government does about it," Ms Whiteley said.

"The answer cannot simply be another tool built on the same system assumptions. What comes next must deliver assessments that uphold dignity and respect, are culturally safe and appropriate, and genuinely understand the person and their circumstances."

NATSIAACC is calling for the next phase of assessment design to be genuinely co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and Older People, the community-controlled sector and First Nations leadership, so that the broader deficiencies now being recognised can be addressed alongside the additional cultural and equity considerations for First Nations people.

"Our Elders and Older People should not have to fit themselves into an assessment system that was never designed around them. This is the opportunity to get it right."

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