



NATSIAACC

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Ageing and Aged Care Council

PERMANENT FIRST NATIONS AGED CARE COMMISSIONER BUT INDEPENDENCE CONCERNS REMAIN

NATSIAACC, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care Council, welcomes Parliament's passage of the *Aged Care Legislation Amendment (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner and Other Measures) Bill 2026* to establish a permanent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Commissioner.

The reform progresses Recommendation 49 of the [Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety](#). However, the rejection of amendments to strengthen the independence of the role leaves key concerns raised by NATSIAACC unresolved.

NATSIAACC's [Senate submission](#) called for a model consistent with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Aged Care Framework and the recommendations in former Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner Andrea Kelly's report, [Transforming Aged Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People](#).

The need for a First Nations Aged Care Commissioner genuinely independent of government was also strongly supported by then Inspector-General of Aged Care Natalie Siegel-Brown.

NATSIAACC CEO Kim Whiteley said:

"This reform reflects years of advocacy by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, Older People and communities. Establishing a permanent Commissioner is a significant step. The measure of this reform will be what changes for Elders and Older People.

"The Commissioner must be able to challenge the very system this legislation placed them within. That requires independence, authority, powers and resources to investigate systemic failures, obtain information and report publicly on what must change.

"Our Elders and Older People have the right to age with dignity and receive culturally safe care that respects their choices and connections to family, community, culture and Country or Island Home. The Commissioner must be able to hold the Aged Care system accountable for upholding those rights in the care Elders and Older People actually receive.

"We recognise the extensive consultation that informed this reform, but the opportunity to build on it through genuine co-design of the legislation was missed. We welcome Minister Rae's commitment to work with NATSIAACC as the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ageing and Aged Care and look forward to putting that commitment into practice through partnership and shared decision-making, consistent with Closing the Gap."

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