

This leaflet is part of a series written by nurses, doctors and experts with experience in aged care. The series aims to make your journey into residential aged care easier. Look for other leaflets on questions to ask about specific care needs. These can be downloaded at:

[www.10questions.org.au](http://www.10questions.org.au)

You may find these leaflets useful when:

- Searching for a high quality residential aged care facility
- Reviewing the quality of your current residential aged care facility
- Deciding between two residential aged care facilities that appear similar.

It's important there are enough registered nurses within the staff skill mix to meet everyone's needs. You should ask questions about how your individual care needs will be met.

Many staff wear similar uniforms. Just because someone looks like a nurse does not mean they are. Here are the differences:

A **Registered Nurse (RN)** has undertaken a minimum three-year Bachelor of Nursing course. They can undertake nursing procedures, manage pain medication and help prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.

An **Enrolled Nurse (EN)** works under the direction of an RN. Both are registered by a regulatory body. Registration ensures professional standards are maintained and protects the public.

**Assistants in Nursing (AIN)/Care Workers/ Care Service Employees (CSE)** work under the supervision and direction of nurses and provide most of the care in residential aged care facilities and community. Their level of training and roles vary.



## IT'S YOUR RIGHT TO ASK

The best way to find a residential aged care facility that suits you is to visit a few.

To find your local ones, or for more information about aged care services contact

**My Aged Care**  
 **1800 200 422** [myagedcare.gov.au](http://myagedcare.gov.au)


You should also be given a copy of the Charter of Aged Care Rights – make sure you ask questions if you need more information  
[www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights)

This leaflet has been developed and endorsed by:



For a full list of supporting organisations please visit  
[www.10questions.org.au](http://www.10questions.org.au)

If you have concerns about a residential aged care facility contact:

 1800 951 822



Australian Government  
 Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

[www.agedcarequality.gov.au](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au)



# 10 Questions

## FOR ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES TO ASK WHEN SEEKING RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE



Special thanks to the Mingaletta Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation – Umina Beach Elders Group, Fairfield Liverpool Elders and the Aboriginal community in the Blacktown/ Nepean area for their help in developing this leaflet.

[www.10questions.org.au](http://www.10questions.org.au)

*You may find it helpful to speak to your local Elders Council, Land Council or Aboriginal Medical Service as a starting point when choosing which homes to view. Word of mouth is also important so ask around in your local community. Check if there is a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in place. Having a RAP doesn't mean one home is better than another. However it shows they recognise inequalities in the care and treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and are taking action to try and make things better<sup>#</sup>.*

### **1 How many Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people live here already?**

It may help if people who may share your language, cultural values and life experiences (including possible past traumatic events) already live there. You don't have to be friends with everyone, but you should still be able to relax in a supportive environment.

### **2 Are any Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander workers currently employed?**

There should be meaningful attempts to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Check how many are already employed and how recruitment strategies attract workers to apply. You may have lowered expectations and be hesitant to ask questions so having staff with lived experience can help break down barriers. Don't be afraid to ask – it's your right. Having staff who may share your cultural values and lived experiences may also help you feel settled once you move in.

### **3 Do you provide ongoing cultural safety training to staff?**

Staff turnover can be high so check that cultural safety training is offered to all new staff, and how often existing staff are given

refresher training. There should be a policy of cultural respect for all staff and residents. Ask how they manage racial conflict that might arise.

### **4 How will you support my cultural identity in the home?**

Ask if daily routines suit your needs including time and space to eat outdoors and if there's a bush tucker garden if you enjoy that food. If it's important to you, ask if National events such as NAIDOC week, Mabo Day and National Sorry Day are celebrated as well as local culturally significant events.

### **5 How will you support my cultural identity outside the home?**

You should remain an active part of your community if you want to. Check how you can be supported to spend time outdoors and within your community, and if staff and transport are provided if needed. There may be an extra charge for this so it's worth checking first. You may be younger and more active than other people in the home, so check how they support younger people's needs.

### **6 How do you recognise and support past trauma?**

Staff should be trained in supporting people who may have suffered institutional abuse, racism and trauma including historical separation from family, kin, and Country and be able to support people to receive culturally appropriate counselling services if needed\*. Removal of religious symbolism from display and inclusion of artwork, pictures, and objects that connect you to your culture and spiritual wellbeing including your flag, and a statement acknowledging Country can provide additional evidence of staff knowledge and understanding.

### **7 How do you support contact with family and friends?**

Your family and friends should be able to visit. Check what the visiting hours are and if people can visit you outside these hours, including overnight. Check the arrangements for communicating with family/friends about your needs and any changes to your care. Look around to see if there is plenty of outdoor garden space to relax, cook and chat freely.

### **8 How will I be supported if I get ill/at end of life\*\*?**

Check if family from Country can stay in your room with you if you are sick and how many can visit/stay at a time. Check what experience they have with helping people to return to their traditional Country. The Aboriginal Land Council may be able to assist with funeral costs so make sure staff have specific knowledge about what help is available to you.

### **9 Is there a regular GP who visits?**

There may not be a local GP who can travel to you so Telehealth may be used. This allows GPs to see you online to make a diagnosis. In these circumstances GPs rely heavily on registered nurses to carry out their recommended treatment, so it's important to make sure enough nurses are present at all times. Ask if the GP who visits has knowledge of, or access to advice on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

### **10 How will my healthcare needs be met?**

By law there should be at least one registered nurse in the place at all times. Check if there are enough nurses given the number and needs of the people living there<sup>^</sup>.

<sup>#</sup>See leaflet on 'staffing' in this series. <sup>#</sup>You should also be given a copy of the Charter of Aged Care Rights – make sure you ask questions if you need more information [www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights](http://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumers/consumer-rights)  
<sup>\*</sup>also see leaflet in this series for forgotten Australians and care leavers <sup>\*\*</sup> also see the leaflet in this series on questions to ask about palliative care <sup>^</sup>See leaflet on 'staffing' in this series.