



# Placing Older Australians at the Centre of Care



Australian Government  
Aged Care Quality and  
Safety Commission



Consumer-centred care is care and services that are designed with the consumer and delivered in a way that meets their individual goals, needs and preferences. This means significantly deepening engagement and developing a mutual partnership with consumers in all aspects of the planning, delivery and evaluation of care and services.



## BOARD AS CONSCIENCE:

To guide your organisation's behaviour

The leaders the sector need are purpose driven – their values and behaviours align with the vision and purpose of the aged care system and its ultimate beneficiaries – older Australians.

Governing body members and executives in aged care wear many hats, which will be subject to changes based on the operating environment and challenges faced at any given moment in time.

'Placing Older Australians at the Centre of Care' speaks to the role that governing body members and executives play in championing the corporate conscience.

The governing body as conscience brings a voice and a vision to their leadership practice, elevating and embedding consumer preference and dignity in the purpose, planning, design and measurement of their services.

When the governing body acts as the conscience of the organisation, members lay firm foundations that will outlive the lives of their governing body tenure, balancing short term returns with long term fiduciary and custodial responsibilities.

The governing body is independent, bringing outside in perspectives and acting with an objectivity that supports them to challenge performance without constraint, ultimately ensuring that older Australian's are treated with dignity, respect and receive safe, inclusive quality care.

Regardless of the mechanisms used, all forms of consumer partnership require the backing of leaders, organisational commitment, support and appropriate resourcing. Consumers need to feel that their governing board values their involvement. This only becomes a reality when everyone in the organisation embraces consumer participation and engagement.

In the desired aged care system, governing body members and executives understand their obligations and are responsible and accountable for ensuring that safe and quality care and services are delivered to consumers.

To achieve this, leaders will need to nurture and cultivate curiosity about the consumer experience, adopting governance, oversight and practices that will ensure that the consumer voice is front and centre of every aspect of the provider's strategy and operating model.



## Consumer-Centric Cultures

When did you and the governing body members last reflect on your consumer centric culture?

### ASK YOURSELF:



Is your role to  
be of service  
to consumers?



Or to deliver  
services to  
consumers?

To enhance partnership with consumers in your organisation, consider the following examples adopted across the sector:

### Increase your interactivity

[SEE NEXT PAGES](#) TO READ SOME  
THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PEERS

### Instil empathy as a universal value

[SEE NEXT PAGES](#) TO READ SOME  
THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PEERS

### Greater consumer engagement with the Governing Body

[SEE NEXT PAGES](#) TO READ SOME  
THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PEERS

### Understand the importance of consumer centred strategy

[SEE NEXT PAGES](#) TO READ SOME  
THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PEERS



## Increase your interactivity



Our governing body members listen in on call centre conversations to hear directly from consumers, their families and advocates. We do this quarterly. It is a powerful and pertinent reminder of the experience and needs of individuals in our care.



Social media is becoming a more and more powerful tool. We take turns to monitor and report on the public narrative about our organisation, our reputation and perceptions about the quality of our services.



We have started requesting regular CEO updates on the consumer experience, including their challenges and concerns to ensure that they and we are connected to our stories and people.

## Instil empathy as a universal value



We made a conscious decision to be of service to consumers, not deliver services to them. We re-designed our organisational values around the pillars that matter to them.



We held a series of Governing Body led listen and learn sessions with consumers and their families (hosted by an independent facilitator) to determine what a 'good life' looks like to them.



We have created mini consumer personas and ensure that each of our decisions are tested through this lens.



## Greater consumer engagement with the Governing Body



We utilise Advisory Committees to strengthen the consumer voice and support direct input into our programs and services. Clarity of roles, open and clear communication, respect for input and careful attention to work processes have been critical for committee success.



In the home care setting, we have had to accommodate the varied needs of individuals. We rotate homes where the advisory committees are held each month and provide transport and personal care supports as needed. Consumers are encouraged to set the agenda and meeting time as per their needs.



In residential care we invite families and advocates into advisory roles and involve them in quality improvement and feedback initiatives.

## Understand the importance of consumer centred strategy



We began by tabling key organisational documents such as commitment statements, strategic plans and policies at our meetings and allocated working groups to determine how these needed to be shift to be more consumer-centred.



We reviewed our strategy after governing body discussions noted that our current strategy focuses mainly on buildings and financial sustainability with little focus on the consumer. We ensured that we included the consumer-voice in the development of our new strategic plan and within each of our strategic objectives. We also identified how we could develop systems and processes to better understand consumer wants and needs.



Australian Government  
Aged Care Quality and  
Safety Commission



## Links and resources

The links and resources below provide additional details and supports to assist you to strengthen this capability ahead of the commencement of your formal learning pathway:

### Additional Resources:



#### Useful videos TO WATCH

- [AICD: Is your board elevating the stakeholder voice?](#)
- [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission: What is Person-Centred Care?](#)



#### Useful articles TO READ

- [KPMG: Aged Care – Rebuilding Trust](#)
- [HBR: Managing for Organisational Integrity](#)
- [COTA: The Voice of Consumers in Home Care: A Practical Guide](#)
- [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission: Consumer Engagement in Aged Care](#)



#### Useful clips to LISTEN TO

- [Safety Monitoring in Aged Care \(30:10\)](#)
- [What Happens Next?: Aged care – Building a healthy and happy future for ageing communities on Apple Podcasts](#)

