

MEDIA RELEASE

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Aged care consumers encouraged to assert their rights as new Aged Care Quality Standards and Charter of Rights commence

New protections for older Australians receiving aged care services will come into effect tomorrow, and the peak advocacy body for older Australians, COTA Australia, is urging all people receiving aged care not to hesitate when it comes to asserting their rights and making decisions about their care.

The new Aged Care Quality Standards and a new Charter of Rights simultaneously come into effect on 1 July. The Quality Standards focus on outcomes for and engagement with consumers, including requirements that aged care providers treat people with respect and dignity, provide safe and appropriate care, and proactively consult with people regarding their care.

The Charter enshrines consumers' rights to dignity, control and freedom from abuse. It also stipulates that consumers be informed of their rights and encouraged to make complaints with service providers without any adverse effects.

COTA Australia Chief Executive, Ian Yates, looks forward to increased transparency and accountability in the sector, which the new Standards intrinsically require.

"Starting tomorrow, the new Standards and Charter of Rights put consumers at the heart of aged care, just as they should be," said Mr Yates.

"Older Australians have the right to be treated with dignity and respect in all aspects of their lives in aged care, whether it's having great meals that are nutritious and enjoyable, having more control and ongoing consultation over their services; and being free from the inappropriate use of physical and chemical restraints.

Consumers now have a one-stop shop, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, which handles complaints and ensures service providers meet all their quality and safety obligations.

"If anyone feels their rights are not being respected, I strongly urge them to speak to their aged care provider. If the issue cannot be resolved, they should not hesitate to call the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on **1800 951 822**," said Mr Yates.

"Aged care providers have had plenty of time to prepare for the introduction of these standards, all of which they should have been practicing anyway, and on which they were widely consulted. There are no excuses for not meeting the standards or failing to consult with and respect older Australians in the matter of their own care."

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The **Aged Care Quality Standards** can be accessed here:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/Aged%20Care%20Quality%20Standards.pdf>

The **Charter of Aged Care Rights** can be accessed here:

<https://agedcare.health.gov.au/quality/single-charter-of-aged-care-rights>

COTA Australia is the peak policy development, advocacy and representation organisation for older Australians, representing COTAs in every State and Territory and through them over 500,000 older Australians.