



Multicultural
Aged Care

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Multicultural Aged Care (MAC) is a peak body organisation within the aged care sector and is the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Diversity and Inclusion in South Australia. We would like to highlight that MAC fully supports the proposed **Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment (Lifting the Income Limit for the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card) Bill 2022.**

The proposed Bill is an important step forward in increasing the quality of life for older people in Australia. It comes during a time where the cost of living has (and continues to) increase significantly while the value of money continues to decrease. Inflation is soaring high, with a CPI increase of 1.8% in the last quarter thus greatly impacting food prices, gasoline costs, and housing costs. Older Australian's are at higher risk of being affected by this due to the likelihood of increased isolation and possible health deterioration, thus making the possible increase of the income test limit greatly beneficial.

Allowing more older Australians to access the benefits from the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card is important as it promotes and supports access to key areas such as health and transport. The positive outcomes of this will be especially helpful for Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, as many CALD people may live alone with little assistance from family members. Giving these individuals an opportunity to access benefits such as cheaper medicine under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme for example is likely to promote the use of our health care system. Additionally, having access to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card will contribute positively towards maintaining an independent lifestyle, allowing for the use of cheaper public transport and increasing the willingness of many older people to get out and about. This is accentuated within CALD communities, where having access to transport enables individuals to participate in social support groups and catch up with other community members. These types of social connections are vital in promoting positive health and wellbeing outcomes as well as an increase in quality of life.

We hope to see continued support and commitment from the Government towards the priority issues highlighted above.

Maria Johns
CEO, Multicultural Aged Care

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Chairperson, Multicultural Aged Care

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