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## **Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee**

### **Inquiry into Aged Care Service Delivery**

**Date:** 10 August 2025

## **Summary of Key Recommendations for Aged Care Service Delivery Reform**

This submission calls for urgent improvements to aged care in Australia, with emphasis on autonomy, cultural inclusion, safe environments, and humane service delivery. It urges Parliament to center dignity and choice for older Australians—not digital systems or institutional convenience.

### **Priority Recommendations**

- **Support autonomy and ageing in place**  
Expand in-home services so older people can remain in familiar surroundings longer, with real lifestyle choices.
- **Reframe digital systems**  
Make digital tools optional, not required; many seniors can't or won't use them.
- **Design facilities for wellbeing**  
Mandate sunrooms, natural light, and gardens in all new care builds.
- **Ensure cultural inclusion**  
Offer diverse food, language, music, celebrations, and social freedom.
- **Guarantee oversight and safety**  
Require 24/7 presence of registered nurses and install surveillance in communal areas, with privacy protections.

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## **1. Summary of Concerns**

Australia's aged care system is too often impersonal, inaccessible, and disconnected from the lives older people wish to lead. This submission urges reforms to center autonomy, respect, and human dignity.

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## **2. Prioritize Autonomy and Ageing in Place**

Older people overwhelmingly want to remain at home as long as possible. Institutionalization should be a choice—not a consequence of broken pathways.

- Expand community and home-based care packages.
  - Make service access human-led, not dependent on My Aged Care navigation.
  - Recognize that dignity begins in familiar surroundings.
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### 3. Digital Systems Should Support, Not Substitute

Digital platforms are often unusable for seniors who face cognitive, literacy, or language barriers. Current systems:

- Assume internet access and digital proficiency.
- Create stress and delays during care coordination.
- Devalue human support and empathy.

Make digital tools optional—not compulsory—and ensure phone, paper, and face-to-face systems are available.

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### 4. Foster Cultural Inclusion and Social Freedom

Care environments must reflect the rich cultural identities of older Australians. This means:

- Diverse food, language, music, and community events.
- Freedom to express personal and spiritual identity.
- Staff trained in cultural safety and respect.

Care should include joy, celebration, and connection—not only medical oversight.

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### 5. Create Healing, Nature-Filled Environments

Sterile buildings are harmful to wellbeing. Aged care design must include:

- Mandatory **sunrooms, gardens, and natural light** access.
- Landscaped outdoor areas integrated into everyday routines.
- Sensory stimulation and calm settings for mental health and physical mobility.

Nature should be part of daily life, not occasional access.

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### 6. Safety Through Accountability and Clinical Presence

To prevent neglect and abuse:

- Require **24/7 registered nurse presence** in all residential facilities.
- Install **surveillance cameras in communal areas**, with clear privacy protocols and independent review access.
- Improve emergency response, medication management, and clinical support.

Safety must be proactive—not reactive.

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## 7. Recommendations

1. **Respect autonomy** by embedding it into service design and daily care.
  2. **Empower ageing in place** with expanded in-home services and accessible coordination.
  3. **Make digital tools optional**, not required.
  4. **Mandate sunlight and nature** in all new facility builds.
  5. **Require registered nurse presence and surveillance** for safety and transparency.
  6. **Promote cultural inclusion** through programming and provider training.
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## 8. Closing Statement

Older Australians have built this country. Their final decades should be filled with dignity, freedom, and care that reflects their values—not the limits of technology or bureaucracy. We must build aged care systems where people thrive, not just survive.

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