

THE HON ANIKA WELLS MP

MINISTER FOR AGED CARE

SENATOR THE HON MALARNDIRRI MCCARTHY

ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

SUPPORT FOR FIRST NATIONS ELDERS TO ACCESS AGED CARE

The Australian Government is investing \$106 million to provide face-to-face support for older First Nations people and \$115 million build culturally safe aged care facilities. This funding will be delivered over four years.

In an Australian first, the Trusted Indigenous Facilitators program will build a First Nations workforce to help individual older First Nations people, their families and carers, to access aged care services that meets their physical and cultural needs.

Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells said, “The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommended the Government ‘ensure that the new aged care system makes specific and adequate provision for the diverse and changing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’ – and so we are doing just that.”

In partnership with the Australian Government, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation will work with Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations to assist older First Nations people and their families navigate and access aged care services. A workforce of around 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across Australia will provide this trusted support.

Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians Malarndirri McCarthy said First Nations communities experience many barriers when accessing aged care services.

“Lack of culturally safe care, a complex system, ongoing trauma, and social and economic disadvantages all contribute to older First Nations people accessing aged care services at a rate lower than needed.

“The Government is committed to delivering aged care and health services that meet the needs of our Elders and enables them to remain close to their homes and connected to their communities.”

Minister Wells said, “A First Nations workforce that supports older First Nations people will enable a system that is more accessible and better able to focus on the aged care service needs of our diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The program will also deliver cultural safety guidance to providers working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.”

Four National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care (NATSIFAC) services in South Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland will receive funding to construct culturally safe, purpose-built facilities.

“NATSIFAC services respond to the needs of local communities by not only providing quality aged care services and employment opportunities for First Nations people, it also provides staff housing to ensure workforce retention and projects to improve integrated health services,” Minister Wells said.

“This grant funding empowers older First Nations people, communities and NATSIFAC providers to contribute to the development of contemporary building design, suitable for people living with dementia, limited mobility, cultural needs and aligned with local expectations.”

The Government has worked in partnership with local communities, Elders, stakeholders and the Aboriginal Community Controlled Sector to consult on a flexible approach to aged care services for First Nations communities, identify service gaps and understand challenges.

The Albanese Government is investing in the aged care reforms to ensure First Nations people are given equitable access to aged care services. The Government is committed to providing culturally safe services, access information for making informed care decisions, and to put security, dignity, quality and humanity back into aged care.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Jo Hegerty (Wells), 0405 028 744

Jamal Ben Haddou (McCarthy), 0417 387 775