

ELDER CARE SUPPORT Newsletter

Edition: July 2025

ECS News

In this edition of ECS news we share key information from across the aged care sector, yarning circle highlights, recommendations from the Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner and a few good news stories that remind us why the work we do matters so much. Whether you're supporting mob in remote, regional or urban communities, your work forms part of a bigger movement to ensure our Elders and older people are respected, connected and most importantly, feel heard and cared for.

It was a pleasure meeting so many of our ECS workforce at the National Yarning Circle in April; "We are transforming aged care by placing culture, connection to Country, and community at its heart".

I continue to highlight the importance of our Elder care workforce as we all strive to ensure our older people and Elders receive culturally safe care and are supported to access aged care systems, services and programs. A massive thankyou to all teams for the work done in getting program deliverables completed for the end of financial year deadline.

Don't forget National Aged Care employee day on **7 August**, we'd love to see how you appreciate and celebrate!

I'm pleased to welcome our new ECS team members, and thank you all for the work you do, walking alongside our Elders with compassion and commitment.

New Staff:

Jesse Williams, Executive Manager ECS/AC, VACCHO

Sharnee Brooks, Assistant Director, NACCHO AC team

Ruth Marquez, Program Manager, NACCHO AC team

Marita Linkson, Senior Advisor, Policy and Advocacy, NACCHO AC team

Monica Barolito-McCabe

Executive Director, Aged Care, NACCHO



We'd love to hear from you!

We'd love to hear of any **new staff**, announcements, your **NAIDOC** events, resources, ideas, & any good news from your communities to share in the August newsletter - send through to: aged.care@naccho.org.au

NACCHO office Aged Care team | Canberra



Sharnce Brooks
Assistant Director



Marita Linkson
Senior Advisor



Ruth Marquez
Program Manager



Peter Sullivan
Data Manager



Bec Crowley
Project Officer



Country, Connection & Community



Book launch – A story from the heart

The Aged Care Team would like to give a big shout out to Mel Armstrong of Warranggal Dreaming, and Priscilla Lawlor of Cills Creations, for the launch of their recently published book, “A Journey to Country ~ Baagii’s Memories”. This story is written by Mel Armstrong, a Gomeroi woman living on Awabakal Country in the Lake Macquarie area of NSW. Mel is the Founding Director of Warranggal Dreaming, who provides a range of holistic services and resources with a focus on connection, wellness and healing. The book is illustrated by Kamilaroi Dunghutti woman, Priscilla Lawlor, to enhance what’s been written and support further understanding, to bridge gaps in all areas.



The book is based on their own story, however written broadly. Mel was a carer for her Nan for most of her life. Mel’s Nan “passed away late last year with advanced dementia, leaving a very big hole and making me the eldest in our family at 50 years of age”.

The story moves through a lived experience of dementia from an Aboriginal perspective and the challenges that come with mainstream care as well as the facilities that are available. It explores the necessity for connection to culture, healing, cultural safety and access to traditional ways including medicines for our old people as they transition into the Dreaming.



Mel’s Nans journey like many, had her living in fear, without identity, with significant trauma, segregation and isolation, sadly, to experience it all over again when her mind failed her, losing her ability to lock the past away and feel safe within herself.

‘Baagii’s Memories’ is written simply to reach various ages, stages and professionals & translated into the Gamilaraay Aboriginal Language.

Content provided by Mel Armstrong

Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner recommendations



Andrea Kelly, Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner, has made several recommendations about how to improve aged care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Listen to Andrea's [2024 Wrap Up](#) where she talks about her travels in 2024 to hear from community about aged care. Read about what she heard, in her [illustrated Community booklet](#) and [report](#).

The new rights-based aged care Act starts from 1 November 2025.

The new rights-based aged care Act responds to issues facing older people, aged care providers, workers and the broader sector. It will put the rights of older people at the centre of the aged care system.

<https://www.health.gov.au>

Staff Spotlight

My name is: Juan Andrade

My role and location within the ECS program: ECS Workforce & Training Coordinator, I work in Broome for Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services (KAMS).

What I love most about my job: I love working in the Kimberley, it is a beautiful country with amazing people. I enjoy having chats and exchange of ideas with colleagues from different services and I love advocating for appropriate aged care services for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the Kimberley.

My mob/nation/people: I respectfully work and live in Yawuru and Djugun Country. I am from northern Mexico and have lived in the Pilbara and the Kimberley regions of Western Australia for the last six years.

I would describe myself as: Inquisitive, cautious, upfront and friendly

When I was growing up my goal was: To become a biologist or a driver of an articulated bus.

My favourite musician/band is: The Killers!!!!

If I could hop on a plane right now, I'd be heading to: Italy!

The food I enjoy eating the most is: Steak beef tacos with salsa roja and no onions and no coriander.

My nickname or other name I'm known by is: Different pronunciations of my name: Ju-wan, Yuan, One, Ju-ann, Whoan, etc. I like them all!

The words I live by are: Respect and Freedom.



HIGHLIGHT - 2025 National Yarning Circle



'At the end of April, the ECS workforce representing their respective regions and communities, gathered on Kurna Country for NACCHO's second National Yarning Circle'. Affiliates, regional partner, and member organisations were welcomed by Kurna/Ngarrindjeri custodian, Robert Taylor.

Day 1 commenced with a cultural grounding, followed by presentations on dementia, brain and spirit health and culturally safe end of life care with a focus on returning to Country.

Keynote speakers included Interim First Nations Aged Care Commissioner, Andrea Kelly; Dementia Support Specialist from Dementia Australia, Jenny Adams; and Clinical Lead at SA Statewide Palliative Care Network, Dr Peter Allcroft.

A workshop on strengths-based ageing: "What's Strong, Not What's Wrong" concluded day 1. This was followed by a dinner and performance to close the day on a positive note.



An inspiring and insightful day 2 continued to provide valuable networking opportunities, and allowed participants to dive deeper into key topics, sharing ideas and building meaningful connections.

The two days were wrapped up with a sense of momentum and motivation to carry the day's conversations into action out in the field.

Overall, the yarning circle established a space for learning, reflection and collaboration with an emphasis on the latest developments and reforms in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and aged care.



Knowledge and Resource Hub



First Nations Hub

First Nations Hub.

Resources, information and guidance to help communities understand aged care system changes, and to help promote culturally safe aged care

Webinar Q&As – Reform Readiness for NATSIFAC Providers

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/reform-readiness-for-natsifac-providers-webinar-qa?language=en>



Looking for Elder Care Support near you?

Visit Locations - NACCHO and choose your State, and Elder Care Support in the dropdown menus, then point and click on the blue dots to identify the services delivering the program in your area of interest.

Currently being updated.

Upcoming Events & Training

- National Aged Care Provider Conference in Naarm/Melbourne 29-30 July

Did you know?

At the time of the 2021 Census, arthritis and diabetes were the most common long-term health conditions experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 and over
Source: (<https://www.gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/resources/dashboards/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-using-aged-care>)



National Aged Care employee day is AUG 7th
send us your pics and story, how will you celebrate our workforce?

The Home Care Workforce Support Program Come work with us!



The Home Care Workforce Support Program strengthens the aged care workforce by attracting, training, and retaining new workers to support the increasing demand for home care services among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and older people.

The Program has been implemented in remote and very remote regions of WA, SA, NT, and QLD, in cooperation with five NACCHO members, to deliver targeted support.

Share with us - we'd love to hear from you!

We invite you to send through your announcements, events, resources, ideas and any good news in your communities to share in upcoming newsletters circulated mid monthly.

Please send through to aged.care@naccho.org.au or if you'd like to give feedback or yarn about anything newsletter related you can reach out to:

Chanel Webb | Communications Officer, Aged Care
P: 02 5104 8557 E: chanel.webb@naccho.org.au



[www.naccho.org.au/aged care](http://www.naccho.org.au/aged%20care)



aged.care@naccho.com.au