

Older Persons and Aged Care

As a result of social determinants of health, older persons living in rural and remote areas¹ experience higher rates of chronic illness, disability, and poor health outcomes, including shorter life expectancy than metropolitan populations. In addition, there is a high representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples within this cohort.

The need for aged care services in rural and remote Australia is significant, and yet older persons who reside in a remote or isolated area often have limited local access to specialist services, including allied health and care options such as residential aged care support.

Older persons who decide to stay in their communities deserve equitable access to care. However, many need to relocate from home communities to larger communities to access residential aged care services. This can result in significant social, emotional, cultural, and financial implications for the person, their family, and their home community.

CRANAplus believes:

- There is overlap in the delivery of primary health care and aged care support to older people in remote and isolated areas.
- The older person living in rural or remote areas of Australia should have access to context appropriate, Culturally Safe, person-centred health and aged care to support ageing in place, where possible and when chosen by the older person and their supporters (family, carers and community).
- Person-centred health and aged care require the equitable distribution of resources to rural and remote areas.
- It is the responsibility of all health professionals in remote and isolated settings to advocate for and champion the health and ageing needs of the older person and older people in the community.
- All health professionals delivering care in remote and isolated areas should develop knowledge and skills specific to the developmental life stage needs of older people.

CRANAplus recommends:

- Health services incorporate the perspectives and experiences of older people into the routine care and clinical governance of the health service, ensuring care is free of assumptions and stereotypes based on age or any other arbitrary characteristic.

¹ For this Position Statement, CRANAplus accepts the chronological age of 65 years and over as being an 'older person' for non-Indigenous Australians and 55 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and acknowledges a continuum in the experience of health and aged care from rural to very remote locations.

- The provision of appropriate funding and resourcing to aged care and health systems to ensure equitable and sustainable access to care for older people in rural and remote settings.
- Innovative models of multidisciplinary team care be implemented, including Nurse Practitioners, Allied Health, Aboriginal Health Worker and Practitioner involvement.
- Sustainable technologies be implemented, to augment health and aged care delivery to suit the older persons' needs and preferences.
- Health professionals in remote and isolated areas be supported to develop knowledge and skills specific to the developmental life stage needs of older people, and that these be valued by health services in recruitment and professional development planning. This includes chronic disease management and care in the case of decline in mental health, cognitive or physical function and the provision of palliative care.
- Investment be made into innovative and localised primary health care programs to support active ageing and quality of life for the older person.
- Health services and health professionals incorporate the [Charter of Aged Care Rights](#) into all care delivered to the older person.
- That transport and other resources for accessing appropriate health and aged care when required be made more widely available.
- Innovative technologies be supported and applied to improve access to health and aged care services for older people.

CRANAplus resolves to:

- Advocate for the equitable delivery of quality health and aged care to older people living in rural and remote areas of Australia.
- Highlight the unique challenges of delivering aged care services in rural and remote areas in consultative forums with government and stakeholders.
- Advocate for increased recognition of the value that Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners bring to aged care.
- Promote aged care, particularly in rural and remote settings, as a valuable and rewarding career path.
- Promote opportunities for the remote and isolated health workforce to develop skills and knowledge to deliver context relevant, Culturally Safe, person-centred aged care, including chronic disease management and care in the case of decline in mental health, cognitive or physical function and the provision of palliative care.
- Advocate for innovative primary health care models to support the health and wellbeing of older people in rural and remote areas of Australia, inclusive of the expertise of Nurse Practitioners and Allied Health.