

Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Purpose

Local Guardians is dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment that provides person-centred care, ensuring that every individual is respected, valued, and supported. Our organisation is committed to cultivating a culture where everyone, regardless of age, nationality, ability, religion, gender identity, or sexuality, feels welcomed and appreciated. We deliver care in line with the Statement of Rights under the Aged Care Act 2024, valuing each person's identity, culture and diversity.

We recognise and celebrate the dignity and choices of our clients, honouring the rich diversity of their backgrounds, characteristics, and lived experiences.

Policy Statement

This policy outlines Local Guardians' commitment to addressing cultural diversity and promoting inclusion. It ensures that our Aged Care services are inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the diverse backgrounds of our clients, while safeguarding their physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.

The cultural preferences and needs of our clients are identified through the care planning process. We have a goal that we seek to actively understand the clients we serve (operationally we are actively aware of the diversity of our consumers).

We recognise the diverse backgrounds and life experiences of the people we support, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people; people living in rural or remote areas; veterans; care leavers; people experiencing or at risk of homelessness; and people of all faiths. For older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, we are committed to providing care that is culturally safe, trauma aware and healing informed.

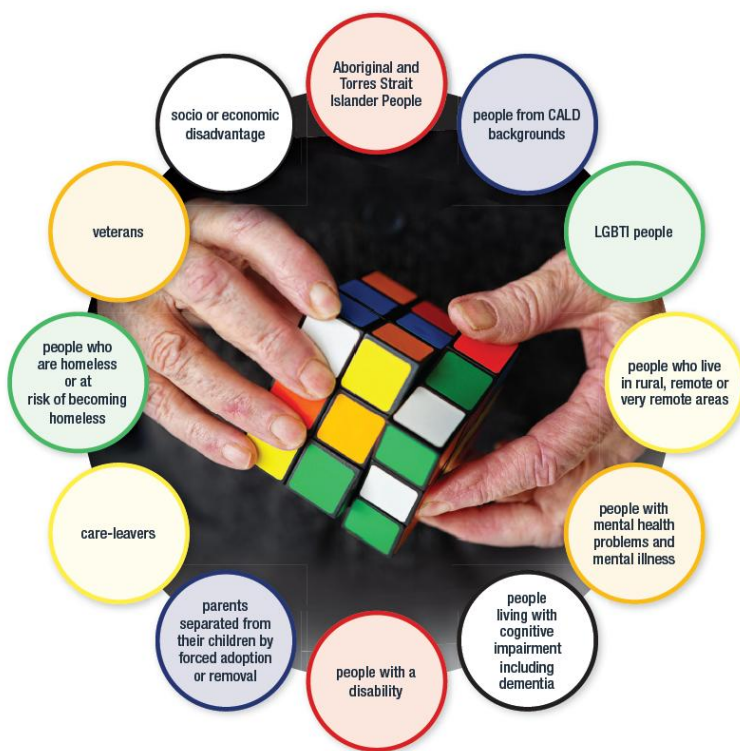
We aim to prevent harassment or discrimination and ensure our team is aware of their obligations to foster an inclusive environment that respects all individuals and their identities.

Our team members must adhere to the Aged Care Code of Conduct and the Statement of Rights. Mandatory and volunteer training opportunities are provided to continuously upskill our team on cultural competence and cultural safety to enhance their understanding of and sensitivity to cultural differences.

Our Board and management are accountable for inclusive and culturally safe governance. Leadership sets the culture, monitors that care is delivered in line with the Statement of Rights, and ensures the diverse needs of our clients are reflected in planning, risk management and continuous improvement.

The Local Guardians care model, combined with the 7 pillars of the Client Dignity and Choice Compliance Framework (see definitions table) enables our clients the greatest level of choice and control that is possible within the Support at Home program. Our subcontractor model ensures that clients can access support workers with the same diverse backgrounds, cultures, views and experiences as them.

Our client acquisition philosophy is to exclusively onboard clients for whom we are the best fit for delivering aged care services. If we determine that another organisation may better meet a potential client's specific needs, we will provide referrals to those organisations.



Definitions

Diversity	Refers to the presence of a wide range of differences within a group, organisation, or society. These differences can include various dimensions such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, disability, socioeconomic status, cultural background, and more. Diversity encompasses not only the visible differences but also the invisible ones, such as different perspectives, experiences, and ideas.
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Inclusion	Is the practice of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their differences, feel welcomed, valued, and able to participate fully in a group, organisation, or community.
Person-centred care (PCC)	Focus on the client as 'the person', it emphasises the importance of viewing the person as a whole, considering their unique circumstances, experiences, and goals, and involving them in decision-making about their care.
Cultural safety	An environment that is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of a person's identity and experience. Cultural safety is determined by the person receiving care.
Trauma aware and healing informed care	Care that recognises the widespread impact of trauma, including intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and responds in ways that support healing and avoids re-traumatisation.
Client Dignity and Choice Compliance Framework	1. Dignity and Respect 2. Identity, culture and diversity 3. Cultural safety 4. Choice 5. Dignity of risk 6. Information 7. Personal privacy
Aged Care Code of Conduct	A. Act with respect for people's rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with applicable laws and conventions. B. Act in a way that treats people with dignity and respect and values their diversity. C. Act with respect for the privacy of people. D. Provide care, supports and services safely and competently, with care and skill. E. Act with integrity, honesty and transparency. F. Promptly take steps to raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of care, support and services. G. Provide care, supports and services free from all forms of violence, discrimination, exploitation, neglect and abuse H. Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, discrimination, exploitation, neglect and abuse or sexual misconduct.
Statement of Rights	Provides a list of rights that all people receiving Australian Government-funded aged care services are entitled to and includes the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to have one's identity, culture and diversity valued, and to receive safe, equitable and culturally appropriate care free from discrimination.

References

- Aged Care Act 2024
- Statement of Rights (Aged Care Act 2024)
- Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards - Standard 1: The Individual
- Aged Care Code of Conduct
- Support at Home Program guidance (Department of Health, Disability and Ageing)

Version History

Version number	Summary of change	Approved by	Effective date
1	Creation of policy to outline the organisations approach to Cultural Diversity and inclusion	Board	01 July 2022
2	Updates of wording in all sections, including additions to the table of definitions and references	Board	01 Sept 2024
3	Updated for the Aged Care Act 2024 and strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards: replaced Charter of Aged Care Rights with Statement of Rights; replaced Home Care Package with Support at Home; added Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and named diversity group commitments; added inclusive governance; updated definitions and references.	Board	27 July 2026