Australian Aged Care

For Chinese elderly

South Eastern Region
Migrant Resource Centre Inc.

Assisting the communities of Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Casey and Cardinia

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We provide services relating to: aged care, settlement, family issues, youth, employment and community education. Our Aged Care Services are outlined in more detail:

**Aged & Disability Services**
The SERMRC Aged & Disability Team is committed to providing older persons, younger persons with a disability and their carers who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with culturally appropriate and responsive services.

**Social Support Program**
This is a friendly visiting program for older and frail people, and younger people with disabilities. Volunteers visit people in their own home.

**Flexible Respite Program**
Support is provided to carers who are caring for older and frail people or younger people with a disability. Carers can meet as a group monthly for guest speakers, sharing issues, socialising and monthly outings.

**Planned Activity Program**
This centre-based program provides structured social and recreational activities aimed at maintaining and enhancing the daily living skills of older and frail people. Lunch and transport to and from the group is provided.
Diverse Care Program
The program employs a diverse range of workers, speaking 50 different languages and dialects. We contract out these workers to other aged care providers, so those providers can provide culturally appropriate personal care, respite and home help.

Chinese Community Partners Project
SERMRC was funded by the Federal Government (Department of Health and Ageing) to improve the access of the elderly Chinese community to the full range of aged care services, especially residential care services.

This has been achieved by:
• educating the community about aged care services
• building relationships between the Chinese community, age care providers and the Migrant Resource Centre.
2. Introduction to Aged Care Services

Aged Care in Australia includes a wide range of schemes to allow older people to remain living in their own homes and maintain their independence, through to providing quality aged care homes.

Australian Governments provide substantial funding to aged care services to assist with the costs associated with receiving care. You will be asked to pay for most services but no one will be denied a service they need, based on an inability to pay fees. The amount charged forms part of an agreement between you and the service provider.

Fees for Home and Community Care services (HACC) are minimal and charged on an hourly basis. To access HACC services, you need to undertake assessment carried out by the agency providing the services.

For Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs), Extended Aged Care at Home Packages (EACH) and Extended Aged Care at Home Dementia (EACHD), older people on the maximum basic rate of pension must not be asked to pay more than 17.5% of that pension.

If you have higher income, you may be asked to pay additional fees (limited to 50% of any income above the maximum pension rate).
Fees in residential aged care facilities are explained in Chapter 7.

An Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) must assess and approve people before they can access CACPs, EACH, EACH D or residential aged care.

The ACAT team includes doctors, nurses or social workers, who provide information and assistance to help older people and their carers work out what kind of care will best meet their needs when they are no longer able to manage at home without assistance.

A member of an ACAT will visit you in your home or in hospital to make an assessment of your needs. ACAT assessment is free of charge and interpreter services are available for people from non-English speaking background.

Referrals to ACAT can be made through your doctor, health centre, hospital, family or by yourself.

For more information about the ACAT closest to you, contact Commonwealth Carelink Centres on 1800 052 222, or the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853.
This Program provides a range of basic support services to frail older people and people with disabilities who are experiencing difficulties in managing daily tasks but who wish to continue living at home. The Program also supports their carers and families.

**What type of help is available in my home?**

**Home Care**
Cleaning, vacuuming, washing clothes, shopping and cooking.

**Personal Care**
Showering, getting dressed and help with eating.

**Meals on Wheels and Centre Based Meal**
Delivering meals ready to eat or re-heat to your home or sometimes to a community venue.

**Property Maintenance**
Installing handrails, changing light globes and checking smoke alarms.

**Nursing**
Giving you advice about managing health problems such as diabetes, incontinence and arthritis.
**Friendly Visiting**
A volunteer can visit you at your home and spend some time with you.

**Telelink**
You can be linked up with other people for regular free chats over the phone.

**Community transport**
If you are too frail to travel to special appointments or activities, your local Council may be able to help. Contact your local Council for more information.

**What type of help is available _in my community?_**

**In a Community Centre**
Planned Activity Groups provide activities such as:
- physical exercises
- arts and crafts,
- dancing and relaxation programs,
- talking with friends and
- receiving advice on nutrition, health and wellbeing.

You, your doctor, a family member or friend can contact your local council, community health centre, migrant resource centre or ethnic community organisation to ask about HACC services.

**In a Community Health Centre**
An allied health professional can provide advice and treatment in relation to:
- Occupational Health and Physiotherapy (helps with problems you may have with movement);
• Diet and nutrition;
• Speech Pathology (helps with speaking and communicating) and
• Podiatry (helps with foot care/walking).

Who is eligible?

You may be able to access HACC services if you are:
• Frail and elderly or have a disability
• Have difficulty doing all the things you need done at home to keep you living safely and independently; or
• A family carer of a person with a disability

Who can provide HACC?

HACC services are provided by local councils, community health centres, migrant resource centres and some community organisations including ethno-specific organisations.

How much does it cost?

Most services charge a small fee. Your income level and ability to pay are considered. Special consideration is given to people with limited finances. (Please refer to page 3 for more details)
Community Aged Care Packages (CACPs) are individually planned and coordinated packages of care. They are tailored to help older people to remain living in their own homes but have complex care needs.

**How can CACPs help me?**

Services available include:
- personal care;
- social support;
- transport to appointments;
- home help;
- meal preparation; and
- gardening.

**Who is eligible?**

To receive a CACP, you must be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) as requiring low level care.

**Who can provide CACP?**

You are given a case manager who will visit you to plan your care needs and a plan of care will be agreed upon.

You, your family or representatives have the right to negotiate
with the case manager on the types and levels of care to be provided. The individual services within a CACP may be provided by a variety of organisations in your local area.

**How much does it cost?**

You will be asked to pay a fee for a CACP. However, no one will be denied a service they need, based on an inability to pay fees. (Please refer to page 3 for more details)
Extended Aged Care at Home (EACH) program assists frail aged people to remain at home, supported by high level care. Packages of care are flexible and coordinated to suit the individual’s particular needs.

**How can EACH help me?**

Services available include:
- nursing & personal care;
- domestic assistance & laundry;
- transport;
- in-home respite;
- social activities & emotional support;
- advocacy;
- care by an allied health professional (physiotherapist, podiatrist, etc); and
- continence management.

**Who is eligible?**

To receive an EACH package, ACAT must assess you as needing high level care at home. If you prefer to be cared for at home, then you may be offered an EACH package of care.
**Who can provide EACH?**

You will be given a case manager who will visit you to develop a plan of care. The individual services within an EACH package may be provided by a variety of organisations in your local area.

**How long does EACH service go for?**

Once you start receiving an EACH package they will continue for as long as they can fully meet your needs or until you choose not to receive them.
The EACH D program can provide *high level* care through an individually tailored package to assist elderly with dementia to remain living in their own home for as long as possible if this is their preference.

**How can EACH D help me?**

An EACH D package is highly flexible and includes qualified nursing input.

Services available include:
- linkages to government funded Dementia Behaviour Management Centres;
- care by an allied health professional;
- personal care;
- home help;
- transport to appointments;
- social support;
- continence management;
- oxygen and/or special feeding requirement.

**Who is eligible?**

To receive an EACH D package, you must first be assessed and approved by an ACAT as a person who:
- is experiencing behaviours of concern and psychological symptoms associated with dementia that significantly
impact upon your ability to live independently in the community, and may impact on functional capacity
• needs high level care in an aged care home
• prefers to receive EACH D, and
• is able to live at home with the support of an EACH D package.

Who can provide EACH D?
You will be given a case manager who will visit you to discuss the options available for meeting your care needs and a plan of care will be agreed upon.

You, your family or representatives have the right to negotiate on the types and levels of care to be provided.

How much does it cost?
You will be asked to pay a fee for the Extended Aged Care at Home package (EACH) or also for an EACH D package. However, no one will be denied a service they need, based on an inability to pay fees. (Please refer to page 3 for more details)
Residential Aged Care is for older people who can no longer live at home.

Reasons can include:
• illness or disability;
• bereavement;
• an emergency;
• the needs of their carer, family or friends; and
• because it is no longer possible to manage at home without help.

What does Residential Care provide?

Residential aged care can be either permanent or short-term (respite).

Permanent care
There are two types of permanent care — low level and high level care.

Low level care facilities (formerly known as hostels) are for people who need some help but can walk or move about on their own.

High level care facilities (previously known as nursing homes) care for people with a greater degree of frailty and need 24-hour nursing care.
Residents in high care must receive additional care and services at no additional cost.

**Respite care**
Respite care offers the opportunity for both the carer, and the person being cared for, to take a break.

This may be for a few hours, a day, a night or a few weeks.

It may be used on an emergency basis, for example, if you are ill, or your carer is absent for any reason such as illness, holidays or going overseas.

It is possible for one person to have up to nine weeks of respite during a financial year.

**What services are provided in Residential Care?**

**For all residents:**
- staff at all times, including in emergency situations;
- assistance with daily living activities such as bathing, showering, dressing and mobility, medications;
- meals and refreshments, taking into account special dietary needs;
- basic furnishings (curtains & chairs) and personal needs (bed linen, bath towels, face washers)
- laundry service, cleaning services and maintenance of buildings and grounds;
- social activities; and
- assistance in obtaining services from their health practitioner such as their family doctor.
For residents with high level care needs.
Additional personal care services can be provided such as:
• specialised furnishings and equipment items, such as walking frames, wheelchairs and lifting devices;
• continence management;
• basic medical and pharmaceutical supplies;
• nursing services;
• provision of therapy services;
• administration of medication; and
• access to oxygen and oxygen equipment

Continence aids must be provided free of charge only for high level care residents. Low level care residents who need continence aids may make arrangements with the hostel to provide them for an additional charge.

Who is eligible?
Both of these types of care require an ACAT assessment and approval for entry.

What care options are available for people with dementia?
Care for people with dementia is available in many residential care homes. It may be provided in separate dementia-specific units. Your ACAT assessment will determine whether you are eligible for this type of care.
Will my culture, language and religion be taken into account?

Yes. All aged care homes are required to provide care that is appropriate to your culture, beliefs and customs.

Your aged care home will encourage and help you to maintain your existing links with cultural, national or social communities, and to take part in the social life of those communities as much as you want to.

They will make arrangements for an interpreter if you need help to explain your needs and preferences. You have the right to practise your own religion wherever you live. Some aged care homes have their own chapel or quiet room.

Others have regular visits from clergy or can arrange transport to the religious establishment of your choice.

Who provides the care in aged care homes?

All residential aged care homes are required to employ suitably skilled and qualified staff.

For instance, all nursing care provided by nursing home must be carried out by a registered nurse.

How much does it cost?

Most residents will pay a number of fees and charges for their residential aged care.
They fall into two categories: **basic daily care fees** and **accommodation payments**.

The amount you can be asked to pay depends on your income* and assets.

**What is the basic daily care fee?**

All residents of aged care homes may be asked to pay a basic daily care fee. This fee contributes to living expenses like meals, laundry, heating/cooling, and nursing and personal care.

This is payable at two rates, pensioner rate or non-pensioner rate.

*Income means income after tax and the Medicare levy.

**What are the accommodation payments?**

On entering permanent residential aged care, residents may be asked to make an accommodation payment if their assets exceed an amount set by the Australian Government.

If you enter low-level (hostel) care, the accommodation payment you may be asked to pay is an accommodation bond. If you enter high-level (nursing home) care, you may be asked to pay an accommodation charge.

Please call Aged Care Information line on **1800 500 853** for more details.
What is the income-tested fee?

Residents (other than respite residents) may also be asked to pay an income-tested fee, depending on their income and level of care. You usually only have to pay this if you are a part-pensioner or a non-pensioner.

Residents will not be asked to pay more than they can afford and no resident will pay more than the cost of their care.

What is the assets assessment?

A resident may be eligible for Government assistance with the cost of their accommodation by taking an asset assessment.

Assets’ testing does not apply to people entering respite care or to people currently residing in an aged care home and who intend to stay at this home.

Please call Centrelink on 1800 227 475 for more details about income assessment and assets assessment.

What if I can’t afford to pay?

Hardship provisions exist to allow your fees and charges to be reduced or waived if you have genuine difficulty paying fees and charges.

Concession Beds are also available for people with limited finances.

To discuss your eligibility to receive this assistance, contact the Aged Care Information Line on 1800 500 853.
Will I need to move into another aged care home if my care needs change?

Some aged care homes specialise in either low level or high level care, BUT many offer both low level and high level care, which allows you to stay in one location even if your care needs increase.

This is often referred to as **ageing in place**.

**Social leave**

You can leave your aged care home for up to 52 nights each year, whenever you want. Spend a night or nights with your carer, family or friends and you do not have to pay an additional fee.

**What will the food be like?**

Your aged care home should offer you a varied, healthy and well balanced diet that takes into account your dietary customs according to religious or cultural beliefs and medical needs.

**What activities will be offered?**

Many aged care homes have staff or therapists who run programs of activities, both in house and community-based. They will discuss your hobbies and interests with you and your family, and then work out how your hobbies and interests can be continued in your new environment.
There are five steps to follow when you think you need to move into a residential aged care home.

1. **Assessing your aged care needs**
   Your care needs will be assessed by ACAT (a team of health professionals).

   The ACAT assessment will show if you are eligible for residential aged care, and this assessment report is valid for 12 months.

2. **Selecting a Residential Aged Care Facility**
   Commonwealth Carelink Centres and ACAT can provide you with information about the residential aged care facilities in your area that suit your particular care needs.

   You can visit different residential care facilities in order to find one that you think can best meet your needs. You can apply to as many facilities as you wish and it is advisable to go on more than one waiting list.

3. **Working out the cost of Residential Aged Care**
   The Australian Government helps with some of the cost of residential aged care, but you will be asked to pay Daily Care Fees and possibly an Accommodation Payment, depending on your income and assets.
4. Applying for Residential Aged Care
You will need to complete an application for either permanent or respite residential aged care. An application form can be obtained from your ACAT, the Aged Care Information Line or the Commonwealth Carelink Centre.

5. Moving into Residential Aged Care
When you move into a Residential Aged Care facility you will be given a Resident Agreement and Charter of Rights and Responsibilities.

You should discuss this agreement with your family and friends or consult with your legal practitioner before signing it.

A Care Coordinator will discuss your care needs with you, your carer, a friend or family member to develop your individual care plan. Staff will also strive to support your specific and cultural needs.