

New service helps older Australians to navigate aged care system

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Improving access to the aged care system for those who need extra support is at the heart of a new care finder program that is rolling out nationwide in 2023.

Targeting senior Australians needing an enhanced level of assistance to interact with the Australian Government's My Aged Care system and access aged care community supports, contracts to operate the new service in Western Australia have recently been awarded to 13 organisations following an open tender process.

Care finders will provide specialised assistance to help eligible people within the target population understand and access aged care services and supports, as well as other community supports.

The new service will be available to people 65 years or older (50 years for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people or people 50 years or older (45 years or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people) on a low income and homeless or at risk of being homeless who:

- Need intensive support to understand and access aged care services as well as to connect with any other supports they need, such as health, housing services, and social supports, and
- Could otherwise fall through the cracks due to isolation, communication or cognitive issues, or a history of past experiences with institutions or government.

Through funding under the national Primary Health Network (PHN) Aged Care Program 2021-2025, WA Primary Health Alliance conducted a care finder program Needs Assessment for Perth North, Perth South and Country WA PHNs in July 2022 to inform the open tender request conditions and service specifications.

WA Primary Health Alliance appreciates all care finder program tender submissions from the sector and will work with the following awarded care finder organisations during the scaling up period (with full service from April 2023) to support the integration of the care finder network into the local aged care system:

- WA Country Health Service
- Australian Red Cross Society
- Amity Health Ltd
- Advocare Incorporated
- St Bartholomew's House Inc
- People Who Care
- Umbrella Multicultural Community Care Services Inc
- Chung Wah Association

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- Chorus Australia Limited
- Dementia Australia
- South West Aboriginal Medical Service
- Tuart Place
- City of Stirling

To find a care finder service in your region, visit [My Aged Care](#). For all other enquiries, please contact contracts@wapha.org.au

Comments attributed to Federal Member for Perth, the Hon Patrick Gorman:

“No matter their background, all Western Australians should be able to access the services they need, including aged care.”

“The Australian Government is supporting WA Primary Health Alliance in connecting our community’s most vulnerable with the services they otherwise might not be able to access.”

“Putting these services within reach of our community is another example of the Australian Government ensuring a better future for all Australians.”

Comments attributed to WA Primary Health Alliance General Manager Commissioned Services Mark Cockayne:

“Most people can access services through the My Aged Care website, or are able to visit a contact centre, but there are some older Australians who, for a range of reasons, may experience significant barriers to understanding and gaining access to the aged care system.

“The new care finder services are a welcomed response to the need for local, face-to-face support in the community for older people who require enhanced support to navigate the complexity of the aged care system.”

Stay up to date on PHN Aged Care Program activities by subscribing to [Aged Care Connect](#)

This activity has been made possible through funding provided by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care under the Primary Health Network Program.

Background

In response to the Aged Care Royal Commission, the Australian Government committed \$7 million through the 2021-22 Budget to extend the [Aged Care System Navigator trial](#). The trials, delivered by COTA Australia and partner organisations, concluded December 2022.

In 2023, the Australian Government has engaged the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to work with Aboriginal Community

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Controlled Services 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. See [Pillar 1 Commitment](#) for further information.

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Media Contact - Fiona Clark, 0437 563 735, fiona.clark@wapha.org.au

About Us: WA Primary Health Alliance shapes, strengthens and sustains primary health care through partnerships and strategies that improve people's access and health outcomes. As the operator of WA's three Primary Health Networks – part of the Australian Government national PHN program – we help communities and people most at risk of poor health to get better access to care closer to home. We achieve this by supporting general practice to deliver the highest quality patient care, funding local primary health care services based on community needs and connecting local services to simplify the health care system. Along with our strong partnerships, our statewide structure allows us to deliver better health, together for the benefit of the WA community. For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au