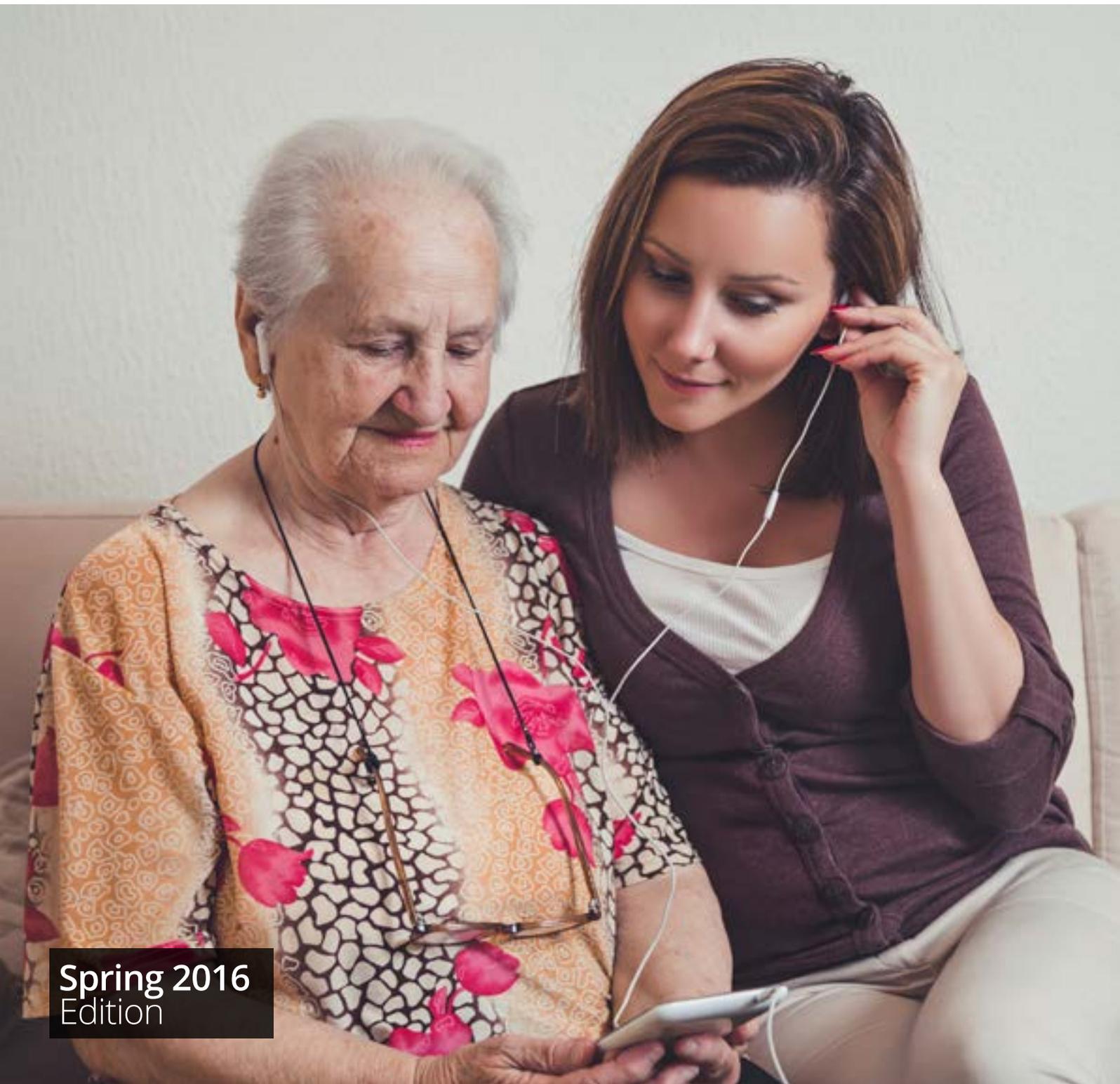




The **7-Step Guide** to **Aged Care** Entry



Spring 2016
Edition

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Revision Date: 17 October 2016



Introduction

The Power of Knowing

Placing a loved one into aged care is stressful.

At **AgedCareReviews.com.au** we know that 93% of families report some level of stress with the process, and half describe the process as being 'Very' or 'Extremely' stressful. Often a loved one will not want to enter a nursing home. The family may be at odds.

We also know that the average residential accommodation deposit (bond) price is nearly \$400,000, and in the majority of instances the family house will need to be sold.

With emotions so high, such little time to make a decision, and so much money at stake, getting the right information to prepare and make informed decisions is crucial.

The **7 Step Guide to Aged Care Entry** has been produced by **AgedCareReviews.com.au** - Australia's largest consumer review website for the aged care industry. It's TripAdvisor for aged care. We have thousands of validated reviews on nursing homes across Australia.

The information in the **7 Step Guide to Aged Care Entry** is concise, and written in plain English. It uncomplicates the process of aged care entry, and gives your family the right information.

Why Reviews Matter in Aged Care

Lots of aged care operators say they provide 'high quality' care. Marketing brochures are glossy, and full of photos of happy residents. But the service received by families differs, and sometimes differs greatly.

With no way to assess the quality of care prior to placing a loved one, reviews from other families take away uncertainty, and provide families with comfort that the decision they have made is the right one.

Tens of thousands of families a month use **AgedCareReviews.com.au** to inform their decision making. They use reviews from other families to make a shortlist of aged care options, then research each of those options.

Once your family has successfully placed a love one into a nursing home we invite you to submit a review on your aged care experience.

Share your experience, and help other families to make a difficult decision easier.

Submit a review on your aged care experience at:
<http://AgedCareReviews.com.au/ReviewUs>

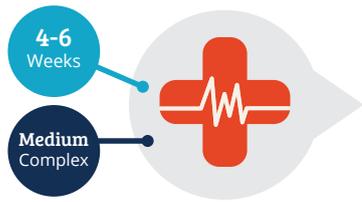
A dark, low-key photograph of a family—a man, a woman, and a child—gathered around a laptop computer. They appear to be looking at the screen together. The image is faded and serves as a background for the text.

Did you know?

More than 2 out of 3 of families report that online ratings & reviews are *'Very Important'* or *'Extremely Important'* to their aged care decision making.

Source: Great Australian Aged Care Entry Survey, 2016

The 7 Steps of Aged Care Entry



STEP 1: Aged Care Assessment

- Eligibility for government subsidised aged care services is determined by the outcome of a compulsory aged care assessment.
- This is a free service offered by your local Aged Care Assessment Team or Aged Care Assessment Services (if you live in Victoria). You can book an aged care assessment by calling 1800 200 422.



STEP 2: Assets & Income Assessment

- This Assessment is administered by Centrelink, and will determine the level of fees payable for aged care. Complete information on a potential resident's income, assets, liabilities will be required.
- The Assessment form will take a few hours to fill out, and the results will typically be sent within 4-6 weeks.



STEP 3: Shortlisting Facilities

- Start with a family discussion about desired location, then consider budget, lifestyle and mobility needs, and the importance of other facility attributes.
- Make a shortlist by reading validated ratings and reviews submitted by residents and families at [AgedCareReviews.com.au](https://www.AgedCareReviews.com.au).



STEP 4: Tours

- Book a tour between 10.30am and 12.30pm, arrive early, ask questions about staffing levels and tenure, see whether planned activities are happening. If possible, have a meal with the residents.
- Get an insiders perspective with 'The Insiders Guide to Aged Care Tours' at [AgedCareReviews.com.au](https://www.AgedCareReviews.com.au)



STEP 5: Understanding Fees

- 4 types of fees apply in aged care - basic daily fee, means tested care fee, accommodation payment and extra services fee.
- The average lump sum accommodation payment (refundable accommodation deposit) across Australia is over \$400,000.
- The decision to sell the family home will be dependent on an Income & Assets Assessment.



STEP 6: Applying & Entering Aged Care

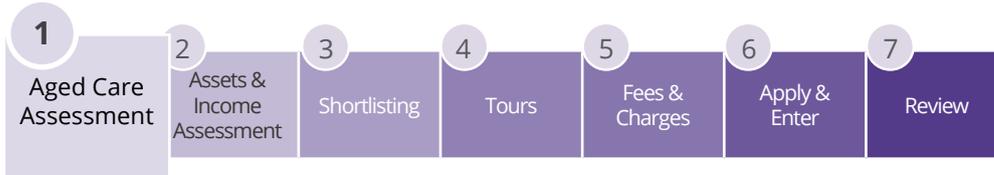
- Waiting lists are increasingly a thing of the past, and many facilities now have vacant beds, so use your bargaining power to demand a lower accommodation bond.
- Keep all paperwork handy and in one spot for an application to an aged care facility. Start a family discussion about sensitive advance care planning, so your family's wishes can be noted.



STEP 7: Reviews

- Submitting a review after you have placed a loved one is a great way to help other families who are facing the same difficult decision. All reviews are anonymous, and it takes less than 2 minutes.
- Submit a review at [AgedCareReviews.com.au/ReviewUs](https://www.AgedCareReviews.com.au/ReviewUs)

Aged Care Assessment



What is an Aged Care Assessment?

An Aged Care Assessment is a compulsory step in the aged care entry process.

During a face to face interview with a member of the government's Aged Care Assessment Team, a comprehensive evaluation of the physical, medical, psychological, cultural, social and restorative care needs of a potential aged care resident takes place.

The outcome of this assessment will determine if the potential aged care resident is eligible for government subsidised aged care services and what level of service is most suitable. The outcome is communicated in writing through a letter addressed to the person who took the assessment.

Why is it required?

An Aged Care Assessment is needed to have the government pay for some or all of your or your loved one's aged care costs.

What information will we need?

The Aged Care Assessment doesn't require the elderly person to fill in any forms, but the following information will be required:

- Details on how day-to-day activities are managed, and how much help is needed to fulfil them;
- Details on state of health. Medical evidence will be required, such as doctors reports, hospital discharge reports, current and past pharmaceutical prescriptions, details on diagnosed illnesses;
- Details on how much assistance is currently required to live at home – e.g. getting in and out of bed, using bathroom and toileting facilities, details on how meals are currently prepared;
- Details on whether respite or other formal home care services have been used, or are currently being used;

A trusted person can assist the elderly person during the assessment (whether it is a family member, nominated representative, or a carer). The assessment occurs as a two way conversation therefore, the person being assessed can ask any relevant questions.

How do we organise this?

Web: An assessment can be requested online by going to MyAgedCare: <http://myagedcare.gov.au/referral>

Phone: Call MyAgedCare on 1800 200 422

An assessment can also be requested by a GP, a doctor, a hospital nurse or administrator, a community nurse or other health care practitioners.

How long does the process take?

The assessment will occur within 30 days of a request being submitted online or by telephone.

The assessment itself takes approximately three hours, and can occur in a potential resident's own home, or in a hospital.

An assessment outcome letter will typically be sent within a week of an assessment occurring.

What will the Aged Care Assessment let us do?

The Aged Care Assessment is a compulsory step that must be completed before entering aged care. It is the key element that determines whether someone is eligible to receive government's subsidised aged care services or not.

The assessment outcome letter will contain a referral code (e.g. 1-XXX XXX XXX). This code will be requested when applying to an aged care facility.

If a potential resident has not been approved for aged care services via the assessment outcome letter, a reassessment can be organised if a change occurs in medical circumstances or coping abilities.

Further information

MyAgedCare.gov.au - <http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/eligibility-and-assessment/acat-assessments>

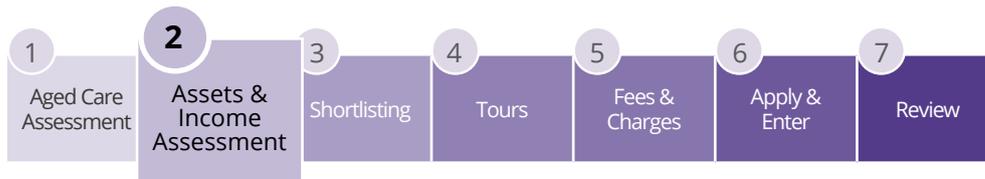
Time Required

4-6 wks

Complexity

Medium

Assets & Income Assessment



What is an Assets & Income Assessment?

The Assets & Income Assessment is a compulsory step in the aged care entry process.

Detailed financial information is provided through a 31 page form submitted to Centrelink or the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).

The outcome of this assessment should be completed prior to someone entering permanent residential aged care. If not done prior to entry, the new resident will be charged the maximum level of fees.

An assets & income assessment is not required for respite or transition care.

Why is it required?

Assets and income of a potential aged care resident are assessed to determine the level of fees and charges that will be charged.

If this financial information is not provided to Centrelink, an aged care resident may be required to pay the maximum level of fees and charges.

For more information on how assets and income affects aged care fees, see our Fact Sheet: Understanding Aged Care: Prices & Payments.

Checklist of information required

- o Details of existing Centrelink / DVA payments;
- o Details of existing primary residence, including mortgage details;
- o Details of income payments (pension, annuities, business income, trust dividends, investment property income, rental income, share income);
- o Details of non primary residence assets (e.g. bank accounts, savings accounts, superannuation, cars, boats, caravans, annuities, stocks, bonds, shares, investment properties, gifts, etc);
- o Details of liabilities (e.g. credit cards, personal loans, outstanding medical bills, outstanding household bills, etc); and
- o Details of carer or family members - particularly those who provide carer services or live in the primary residence).

How do we organise this?

A Centrelink form called *Permanent Residential Aged Care – Request for a Combined Assets and Income Assessment (SA457)* must be completed.

Before completing the form, the *Information you need to know about your claim for Permanent Residential Aged Care Request for a Combined Assets and Income Assessment* booklet should be read. This can be obtained via the internet, or from a Centrelink office.

You can request the SA457 form by calling Centrelink on 132 300.

The completed form will need to be filled in, signed and returned to Centrelink or to the DVA together with all the required supporting documents.

If the form is returned prior to entering a residential care service, the initial fee notification advice will be valid for 120 days unless there is a significant change in circumstances.

How long does the process take?

Relevant documents should be compiled in the months prior to aged care being required.

Filling out the form may take a few hours.

The form must be submitted to a Centrelink office or the DVA, along with copies of required documentation.

The results of the assets & income assessment will typically be sent to the potential resident within 4-6 weeks after submitting the form to Centrelink.

Further information

MyAgedCare.gov.au - <http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/aged-care-homes-costs-explained/income-and-assets-assessment-aged-care-home-costs>

Centrelink - <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/forms/ci020>

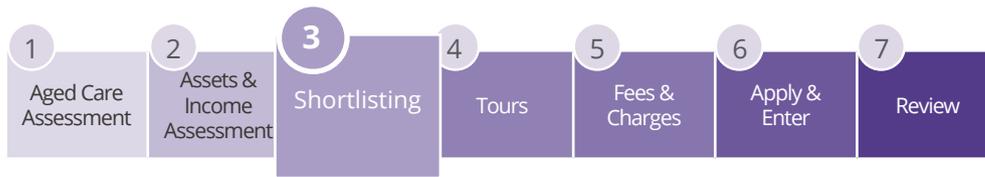
Time Required

4-6 wks

Complexity

High

Shortlisting facilities



Why shortlist?

Selecting the best aged care facility is a time consuming, emotional and personal process.

It involves matching personality, care needs, attitudes and desires with a provider that can be trusted.

Shortlisting a handful of nursing homes to thoroughly investigate will provide you and your family with confidence and peace of mind.

The first consideration: location

The best way to start the process of narrowing down aged care facility options is with open family discussion.

The main question to be answered is: where?

Often the choice of location is the most important deciding factor. Families will often want to place a loved one in a facility a short distance from one or more family members.

Because maintaining a connection to the family is so important, the family should discuss who is most likely to be involved, on an ongoing basis, with visiting the potential resident.

Other considerations

After a rough area has been agreed, the family needs to discuss what else is important.

This discussion should focus on the needs of the potential resident.

Think about considerations like:

- How long does the family have to make a decision?
- What's the budget? Will the potential resident have to pay an up-front bond (Refundable Accommodation Deposit)?
- The current lifestyle and mobility of the potential resident.
- Is the preference a single room, or will a double room suffice?
- How important is food and meals?
- How important is access to a garden?
- How important is activities to the happiness and wellbeing of the potential resident?
- How important is the quality and 'new-ness' of the building?

Making a shortlist

Once a family has a clear idea of what is important to their decision making, a good place to start is by reading the reviews of other families.

This can be done on AgedCareReviews.com.au

These validated reviews are written by family members and residents themselves. Every aged care facility in Australia is listed on AgedCareReviews.com.au, and the website is independent and free to use. Finding required information is simple and fast. You can search by location, and select a radius to suit.

Many facilities listed on AgedCareReviews.com.au have also uploaded photos and descriptions of the services they offer. The website also details the maximum Refundable Accommodation Deposit (RAD) that a facility will charge.

Word of mouth is another important source. Ask friends, work colleagues and other family members about their aged care experiences.

Other helpful sources / resources include:

- MyAgedCare.gov.au;
- Social workers within a hospital, or aged care assessment team members;

How many should we shortlist?

The more options a family has the better. Typically this means having a least three facilities on a shortlist.

Remember - aged care facilities are becoming increasingly determined to fill their beds. That means they may negotiate on what, if any, accommodation payments they may charge.

Further information

AgedCareReviews.com.au - <http://agedcarereviews.com.au/step3>

Time Required

Complexity

1-3 mths

Medium

Tours



Preparing for a tour

Prior to doing any tours, having a discussion with the potential resident, and make a list about personal needs and preferences. For example, you may discover that the range of lifestyle activities is more important than how modern the building looks.

After this, reading up on the facility via their website will help define what particular aspects should be looked out for during the tour.

When to visit

If you can, book your appointment between 10.30am and 12.30pm – the time when the most amount of activities are scheduled. Doing this will help you see how involved the residents are in their environment, and what type of lifestyle activities the facility has. You can then assess whether these types of activities will be suitable.

Arrive early

If possible, arrive at the facility at least 10-15 minutes early. This will allow a visitor to observe how staff interact with each other and towards the residents. Seeing smiling faces and helpful staff means that the people working there actually enjoy their job and provide good care to the elderly.

What to look for on a tour?

- o **Staff tenure.** High staff turnover is an indicator of poor culture in a facility. Ask how long the manager, registered nurses, care manager, and carers have been working at the facility. Pay particularly close attention to how long the manager and care manager/registered nurses have been working there.
- o **Staffing levels.** Staff to residents' ratios are crucial as they determine how much care and attention a resident gets at any time of the day. The more staff, the better. Ask about the ratio of residents to staff on AM shift, PM shift and overnight.
- o **Agency staff.** Use of agency (third party) staff indicates an unsettled staffing roster, and is a potential indicator of a less settled environment. Ask how often the facility uses agency staff – for example, how many agency staff have been used in the past week?

- o **Activities calendar.** The activities calendar shows what the organised activities are, and how often they take place. With not much to do during the day, residents may feel depressed and lonely. Check the day and time, and see whether the scheduled activity on the calendar is happening - if not, ask why.
- o **Meals and menu.** The meals provided to residents need to be both nutritious and tasty. Ask how often the menu is changed. Check to see if the quality of food served while you are visiting matches the description. Having a meal with the residents is a really good idea to see whether the food is tasty, with the right textures, cooked with fresh produce, and served at the right temperature.
- o **Cleanliness and smell.** Upon entering the facility focus on the smell both in residents' rooms and in common spaces. This will provide an idea on how often housekeeping is provided. This should occur daily.
- o **Building and amenities.** Ask to see both public areas and an example of the room the potential resident will be staying in. Check the nature and complexity of access from that room to common areas and outdoor gardens. Having access to a spacious, well maintained garden is also important for the care recipients as getting fresh air and sun is crucial for their wellbeing.
- o **Residents' feedback.** Having a conversation with at least two or three residents about their likes and dislikes is an effective way to hear an honest opinion about how the life of the future care recipient would look like. Also, the way they are dressed and groomed is an important factor to look at. If they look neat and clean, it means that they receive the assistance and care they need. Ask if the facility can provide you with any letters of recommendation / references for their facility (maybe from a past resident or their family).

Further information

AgedCareReviews.com.au - <http://agedcarereviews.com.au/step4>

Time Required

2-4 wks

Complexity

Medium

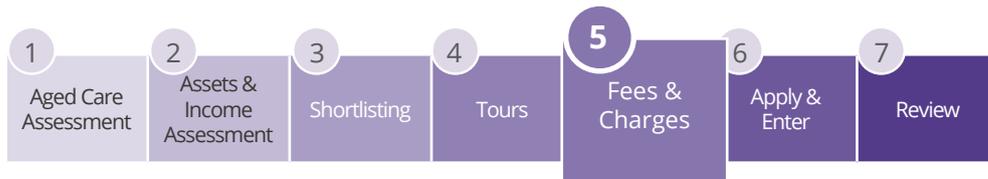


Did you know?

In 2015, the average published price of new aged care accommodation bonds for metropolitan areas was **\$381,000**.

Source: Aged Care Financing Authority, 2016

Fees & Charges



Overview

Four types of fees potentially apply for residential aged care:

- Basic daily fee
- Means tested care fee
- Accommodation payment
- Extra Services Fees

Basic daily fee

Every aged care resident must pay the basic daily fee. This fee is used for covering the day-to-day livings costs of residents such as meals, heating, cleaning. The maximum daily fee which can be requested by a provider is **\$48.25**.

Means tested care fee

The amount, if any, of a means tested care fee will depend on the outcome of an Assets & Income Assessment.

Generally, if assets are above \$159,423 or assessable annual income is above \$25,711, a means tested care fee will apply.

If the means tested care fee is applicable, it is capped at an annual amount of \$25,939. A lifetime cap of \$62,255 also applies.

The former primary residence may count as an asset, if a family member or carer is not, or has not, been living at the house. If the former house is included, its value is capped at \$159,423.



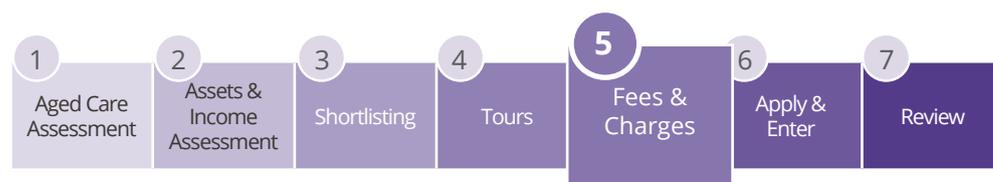
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Fees & Charges



Accommodation payment

If assessed assets is between \$46,500-\$159,423 a partial accommodation payment (called an accommodation contribution) will be required.

An incoming resident with assets above \$159,423 will be required to make a full accommodation payment.

An accommodation payment can be paid in a number of ways:

Method	Detail
Lump sum	<p>Also known as 'Refundable Accommodation Deposit' (RAD) or 'Refundable Accommodation Contribution' (RAC).</p> <p>The amount charged will vary from facility to facility, and from room type to room type.</p> <p>Aged care providers must publish their maximum RAD, but a lower RAD can be negotiated one-on-one.</p> <p>Until the lump sum is paid (max 6 mths) a daily fee will be charged.</p> <p>The lump will be largely refunded on exit, but fees may be deducted from the lump sum by an operator. These charges vary in name - "Asset Replacement Fee", "Capital Refurbishment Fee", or "Asset Replacement Contribution Fee", and can be as much as \$15,000 p.a.</p>
Daily fee	<p>Also known as a <i>Daily Accommodation Payment</i> (DAP) or <i>Daily Accommodation Charge</i> (DAC)</p> <p>The daily fee is calculated by reference to the RAD - applying an interest rate (currently 6.01%) to the lump sum amount, then dividing by 364 to make a daily fee.</p>
Partial lump sum + partial daily fee	<p>This scenario involves paying the accommodation payment partially with a lump sum, and partially as a daily fee.</p> <p>The daily fee component (DAP/DAC) can be deducted from the lump sum component (RAD/RAC).</p>

Extra Service Fees

Additional monthly fees will be charged if a resident opts for extra services, such as satellite TV, hairdressing, special therapies, etc. The Extra Service Fee will be negotiated between the care recipient and the aged care provider.

Should we sell the former home?

Selling the family home to pay for aged care fees is a decision with a significant financial impact. The decision will impact pension eligibility, assessed assets and the means tested care fee.

The decision on selling or not selling the family home needs to be made utilising specialised financial advice.

Further information

MyAgedCare.gov.au - <http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/financial-and-legal/aged-care-homes-costs-explained>

Centrelink - <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/forms/sa461>

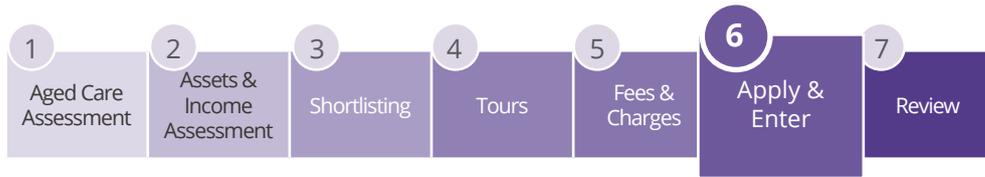
La Trobe Financial Aged Care Loan - <http://latrobecom.au>

Time Required

Complexity

1-6 mths **Very High**

Applying & Entering Aged Care



When can we apply to facilities?

Applying to aged care facilities should only occur once (i) an Aged Care Assessment has been obtained; and (ii) an Assets & Income Assessment has been completed and the written results have been received.

In addition, we recommend applying once a shortlist of facilities has been developed, tours have been conducted, and the future care recipient is ready to enter residential aged care.

What about waiting lists?

Historically the chronic shortage of aged care beds meant that most nursing homes had waiting lists.

In recent years a large number of aged care facilities have opened up. That means many facilities no longer have waiting lists, and a significant number have beds available for immediate entry.

If a preferred nursing home is full and has a waiting list, it is recommended that you join the waiting list. There is no limit to the number of facilities you can apply to.

How do we apply to a facility?

Every aged care facility will have a slightly different application form that must be filled out.

A copy of the aged care assessment, including the covering letter containing a 'referral code' must be provided with an application.

When filling the application form the referral code, personal information and financial information must be provided.

Typically, the nature of personal and financial information that will be requested includes:

- Full name, DOB, marital status of applicant;
- ACAT/ACAS approval letter (copy);
- Health Insurance and Medicare details;
- Medical details, such as a detailed summary of applicant's health;
- The applicant's funeral arrangements;
- Advance Care Directives;
- Family and other contacts details;

- Legal and financial management details, such as certified copies of Power of Attorney/Guardian;
- Copy of the Assets & Income Assessment letter which is sent by Centrelink or by the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

What happens after we apply?

After filling in the application form and returning it to the facility as a hard copy or electronically, the facility will contact the applicant and state if the application has been accepted or rejected, within 3-5 business days from the moment when the application form has been returned.

If the application is accepted, the nursing home will extend the applicant an offer and once the offer is accepted, the nursing home will ask the future resident to read and sign a Resident Agreement.

If the application is rejected, the applicant will be contacted.

Moving into aged care

Each facility has its own rules about what can be brought with a new resident. Typically, a resident will be allowed to bring small electrical appliances (e.g. radio, DVD player, etc).

New residents can bring other small household items, such as books and music, photographs, bedside lights, small tables or a favourite chair.

Its often recommended that clothing be labelled with the name of the resident.

Advance care planning

In the first few days of moving into aged care, the facility nursing staff will require specific directives from a resident and their family in relation to advance care needs.

This will require sensitive family discussions about end of life directives (e.g. do not resuscitate); and who should be notified in case of medical complications.

Further information

MyAgedCare.gov.au - <http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/considering-aged-care-home/applying-aged-care-home>

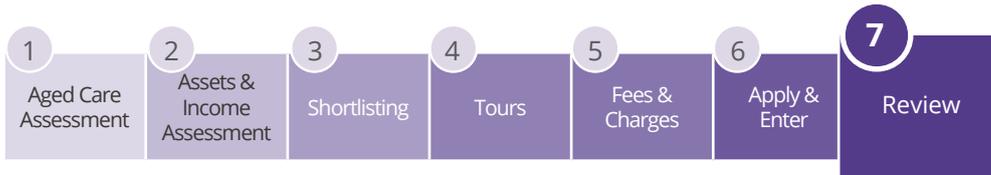
Time Required

1-2 wks

Complexity

Medium

Review



What is AgedCareReviews.com.au?

Established in 2013 after the experiences of two regular aged care consumers, **AgedCareReviews.com.au** has grown into Australia's largest consumer review website for the aged care industry.

The website displays thousands of validated reviews submitted by residents and their families.

Tens of thousands of families a month use **AgedCareReviews.com.au** to inform their decision making, make their shortlist, and research their aged care options.

Why submit a review?

Aged care entry is a stressful, emotional and expensive journey.

A recent survey found that just under half of aged care entries have to happen in under four weeks; that over half of entries involve selling the former family home; and that for over half of families the process is 'very' or 'extremely' stressful.

Families have very little information to go on when making a shortlist. With the average accommodation bond price over \$400,000 and rising, it's a decision that demands more information.

Reviews help other families make a difficult decision easier. It's the power of knowing.

What about anonymity?

All reviews submitted on **AgedCareReviews.com.au** are anonymous - you can select a username of your choice, or randomly select an anonymous username.

The only personal information we collect is an email address. This is done in case we need to verify the reviewer.

Under no circumstances are the contact details of a reviewer passed onto an organisation.

What's involved in a review?

A rating of one to five stars is given against a number of criteria:

- Quality of building
- Quality of staff & care
- Quality of lifestyle & wellbeing
- Quality of food
- Overall quality

You will then be invited to talk about your experience in the review. You can use this to talk about what the facility does well, what needs improvement, and how your family found the experience.

Does the review have to be positive?

No. It doesn't matter whether your review is negative, positive or both. What's important is that you talk about your experience.

All reviews must conform with our Content Guidelines. That means reviews from operators, staff or health professionals aren't allowed. Only genuine aged care experiences from residents or their family members.

How long will it take?

A review will take about 2 minutes to complete.

How can we submit a review?

Submit a review on your aged care experience at:

<http://AgedCareReviews.com.au/ReviewUs>

Time Required

2 min

Complexity

Low

