

Australians want to live at home as long as possible ... that's a given. Negative perceptions of aged care are waning but there is a massive mismatch between positive ratings given by the general public (22%) and by those 'involved' (74%) i.e. those with a family member currently in aged care. We've heard the bad news stories over a long time. No-one seems to be telling the good news stories.

*Staff very caring. I was always kept informed of any issues or problems with my husband. **There was always something happening in the Dementia unit** and residents involved in many different activities - Female, 80+*

Fears around aged care persist, the complexity of the system and high costs. Some of these fears may grow with the new aged care act where providers are permitted to raise entry costs, charge for 'extras' and keep a percentage of the refundable deposit (RAD). Some Australians will resent this change. Others concede that wealthier Australians should contribute to their care and fund their own lifestyle options like yoga, TV streaming and access to alcohol.

*Aged care is becoming **cost prohibitive for those in lower asset brackets** - Female, 60 - 69*

Those considering aged care for themselves, a partner or family member in the future tell us that location, cost and reputation will be important criteria. However those who have recently made a decision, advise that availability was the most significant choice factor. Availability will be the key driver in the future as the number of over-80s expands at a far higher rate than the number of aged care facilities being built. This could easily become a crisis within 10 years. Your well-meaning author encourages you to look to health and lifestyle factors to stay fit and strong, reducing the risk of needing care.

Those with a family member in aged care rate their provider positively for safety, caring, a pleasant environment and staying in touch. More favourable feedback is given for food, the dining experience and lifestyle activities, however these three factors still get modest satisfaction ratings.

*I was most impressed by the **caring staff and their kindness towards "clients"** - the personnel seemed largely to be of migrant background with strong family ties and great respect for the aged - Female, 80+*

But for every positive, there was negative comment too ... many of which were from family members of former residents.

*Food was uninteresting even though we were paying for higher quality; **Staff not following through on requests**; failure to respond to questions about care and facilities - Female, 70 -79*

Four in ten of those considering aged care for the future indicate they would like to trial the service via a respite stay. That was certainly a significant step for my Dad who enjoyed the movie nights and sing-a-longs.

At least eight in ten are willing to pay for optional extras or support that spend for a family member in aged care. Australians expect that a TV, range of menu options and WiFi connection would be provided without an additional charge. However most accept they would need to pay for TV streaming, alcohol, yoga etc.

Thanks again to all those who participated in our study. Apologies that the survey was a little long. Congratulations to the \$150 voucher recipients. We received some lovely messages from those able to afford a Christmas treat or forward the voucher on as a gift. A list of recipients can be seen [here](#).

Lastly, we have a very important study coming mid-February. This will be the first Home Care study since the new Support at Home regulations commenced last November. We're keen to hear good and bad news stories from recipients and family members as well as those who may consider Home Care for themselves or a family member in the future. If you know of anyone who may wish to tell their story, please forward this introduction and link below so they can register for a survey invite.

Ageing Matters will be conducting a study on Home Care mid-February. Please click the link below to register your interest in receiving a survey invite.

Link

Ageing Matters conducts independent studies on Home Care, Retirement Living and Residential Care. They gather the voice of consumers (users, future/potential users and family members) to help guide provider decisions and improvement initiatives.

Kevin & Robert

Ageing Matters

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