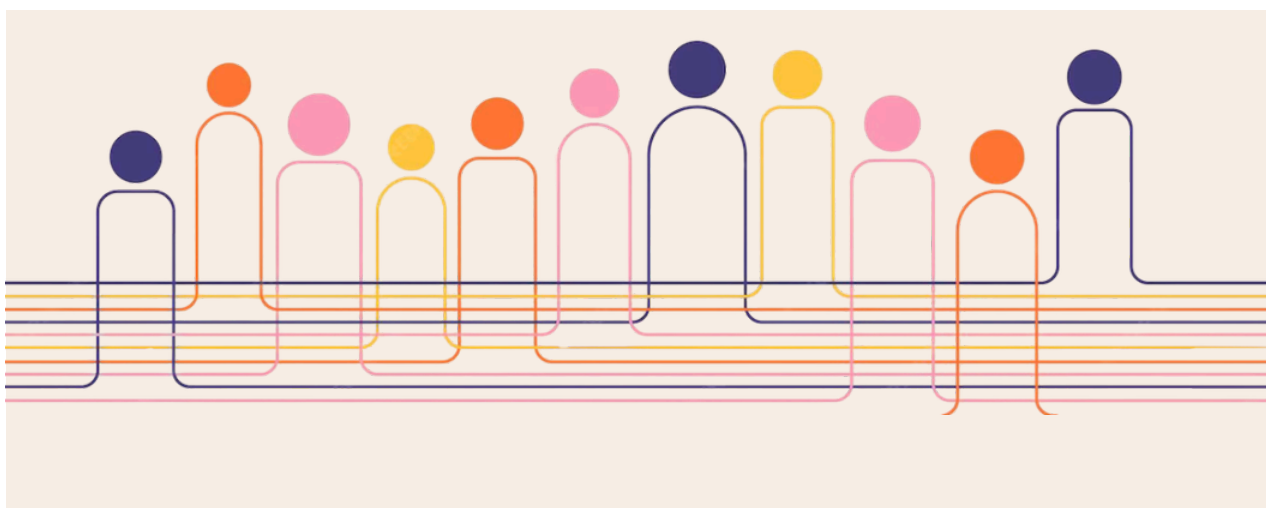


WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IN AGED CARE



CELEBRATING CULTURAL HARMONY IN AGED CARE



March presents an important opportunity for the aged care sector to focus on both cultural inclusion and person-centred care, with Harmony Week and National Advance Care Planning Week both taking place from 16–22 March.

Harmony Week celebrates Australia's cultural diversity and promotes inclusiveness and a sense of belonging. In aged care, this is especially important, as many older people accessing services, as well as the workforce, come from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

At the same time, National Advance Care Planning Week highlights the importance of supporting older people to understand and communicate their preferences for future care, including through Advance Care Directives.

This edition of CQ in Aged Care brings these themes together, providing practical insights and resources to support inclusive and culturally responsive aged care practice.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- Harmony Week in Aged Care: Celebrating Culture, Connection and Belonging
- National Advance Care Planning Week 2026
- A snapshot of cultural celebrations in March 2026
- Celebrating Workforce in Aged Care: Harmony Week
- Resource Spotlight - Multicultural calendar 2026 and Microlearning Sessions
- Resource Spotlight - Library and Micro Learning Sessions
- Celebrating George: Governor's Multicultural Awards Finalist
- Your voice matters - More information!

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Multicultural
Aged Care

HARMONY WEEK IN AGED CARE: CELEBRATING CULTURE, CONNECTION AND BELONGING

Harmony Week (16–22 March) celebrates Australia's cultural diversity and promotes inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging. In aged care, this is especially meaningful, as both older people and the workforce reflect a wide range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

For older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, maintaining cultural identity, language and traditions is closely linked to wellbeing, dignity and quality of life. Recognising and valuing culture supports more person-centred and culturally responsive care.

Harmony Week is a reminder to recognise each person's culture, history and preferences in everyday care. Small, meaningful actions can support older people to feel respected, understood and connected to their culture and community.

Celebrate diversity through shared experiences

Recognising the cultural diversity of both residents and staff helps build inclusive environments.

- Organise cultural events, performances or themed activities
- Host multicultural food experiences or tastings
- Create opportunities for staff and residents to share their cultures

Encourage storytelling and connection

Sharing stories helps older people feel recognised and valued.

- Encourage older people to share their life stories, traditions and preferences
- Incorporate culturally familiar activities, music and celebrations
- Support choice and independence in how individuals participate
- Create safe spaces where people feel comfortable expressing their identity



HARMONY WEEK IN AGED CARE: CELEBRATING CULTURE, CONNECTION AND BELONGING

Support communication and language access

Supporting communication in preferred language helps people express preferences and feel included.

- Use interpreters or bilingual staff where possible
- Engage families to support communication and understanding
- Access free interpreting services through TIS National

Embed culture into care planning

Culturally appropriate care goes beyond celebrations and should be reflected in everyday practice.

- Consider cultural and religious practices in care plans
- Be aware of dietary requirements and preferences
- Respect traditions, routines and cultural values
- Offer staff training on cultural competence and diversity awareness

Resources:

- Visit the [Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care website](#) to access information and training that can support you and your organisation to deliver culturally appropriate care to older people from CALD communities.
- [Food, nutrition and dining in Harmony Week](#)
- [Taste of Harmony recipes and ideas](#)
- [Harmony week resources](#)



NATIONAL ADVANCE CARE PLANNING WEEK

YOUR STORY, YOUR CHOICE

National Advance Care Planning Week | 16–22 March

National Advance Care Planning Week (16–22 March) highlights the importance of supporting people to reflect on and communicate their preferences for future care. For older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, this is especially important, as experiences of care, decision-making and communication are often shaped by culture, language and family roles.

Advance care planning provides an opportunity for individuals to express what matters most to them, including their values, beliefs and preferences for care. For people from CALD communities, this may include cultural or religious practices, preferences around food and rituals, or expectations about the involvement of family in decision-making.

Why it is important?

- Advance care planning helps ensure that care aligns with a person's cultural, spiritual and personal values, particularly during times when they may not be able to communicate their wishes.
- For individuals who may face language barriers or unfamiliarity with the aged care system, advance care planning provides a structured way to express preferences and be heard.
- In many CALD communities, decision-making is shared with family members. Advance care planning can support clear communication and help families understand and honour the person's wishes.
- When preferences are known and documented, families and care teams are better supported to make decisions, reducing confusion or distress during critical moments.



NATIONAL ADVANCE CARE PLANNING WEEK

YOUR STORY, YOUR CHOICE

National Advance Care Planning Week | 16–22 March

Advance care planning conversations may feel unfamiliar or sensitive for some individuals. Cultural beliefs about illness, ageing and end-of-life care can influence how and when these discussions take place. It is important to approach conversations with respect, cultural awareness and flexibility, allowing time to build trust and understanding.

Language differences, limited familiarity with the Australian aged care system, and varying cultural perspectives can add complexity to these conversations. In some cultures, discussions about future care may be avoided, while in others, decision-making is shared collectively within families rather than made by the individual alone.

Advance care planning is not only about making decisions for the future. It is about understanding the person's story, respecting their identity, and ensuring their care reflects what is meaningful to them.

For older people from CALD backgrounds, culturally appropriate advance care planning supports dignity, choice and inclusion, and strengthens the delivery of person-centred aged care.

Please learn more at the resources below:

- [Advance Care Planning Australia](#)
- [ELDAC Home Care Toolkit - Advance Care Planning](#)
- [ELDAC Advance Care Directives - Practical Resources](#)
- [ELDAC Advance Care Directives 7 Questions](#)
- [Palliative Care Australia - Advance Care Planning and Conversations](#)

Multicultural Aged Care Resources to explore:

- [CALD Community of Practice - Palliative Care](#)
- [Living Fully, Caring Deeply - Symposium on Palliative Care](#)
- [The Untold Stories; conversations that must be had Theme: Palliative Care and End of Life](#)
- [Palliative Care with a focus on Dementia – Research, Innovations and Best Practice](#)
- [Palliative Care Webinar Series](#)



A SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

17 March – St. Patrick's Day

St Patrick's Day is an Irish cultural and religious celebration honouring St Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. It is widely observed as a celebration of Irish heritage, community, and identity. In aged care, it can be an opportunity to recognise Irish cultural traditions and create moments of connection, particularly for those with Irish backgrounds.

Common traditions may include:

- Wearing green or shamrock symbols
- Irish music, dancing or storytelling
- Sharing traditional Irish foods
- Community gatherings or themed activities

Activity ideas:

- Listening to Irish music or hosting a gentle sing-along
- Simple themed craft activity such as shamrocks
- Offering Irish-inspired meals or afternoon tea
- Sharing stories, photos or short videos about Ireland
- Creating a small green-themed display in shared spaces



19-20 March - Eid Al Fitr

Eid al-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting. It is a time of celebration, gratitude, community and giving.

For older people observing Eid, it is often a significant cultural and spiritual occasion centred around family, food and connection.

Common traditions may include:

- Special prayers and reflection
- Sharing meals with family and community
- Giving to charity and acts of kindness
- Wearing new or special clothing

Activity ideas:

- Sharing culturally familiar sweets or light refreshments
- Creating a welcoming space for family visits
- Playing gentle cultural music or storytelling
- Acknowledging the day with a simple greeting or message
- Offering a quiet space for reflection or prayer if desired

A SNAPSHOT OF CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

21 March – Nowruz

Nowruz is the Persian New Year, celebrated by many communities across the Middle East, Central Asia and beyond. It marks the beginning of spring and symbolises renewal, hope and new beginnings. For older people, Nowruz may hold strong cultural and emotional significance.

Common traditions may include:

- Setting up a Haft-Seen table with symbolic items
- Visiting family and friends
- Sharing festive meals
- Reflecting on renewal and the year ahead

Activity ideas:

- Displaying a simple Haft-Seen table in a common area
- Sharing tea, sweets or culturally familiar foods
- Listening to cultural music or stories about Nowruz
- Inviting gentle group discussions about spring and new beginnings



29 March - Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week in the Christian calendar and commemorates the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is often observed as a time of reflection and spiritual preparation. For many older people, this may be an important religious observance.

Common traditions may include:

- Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week in the Christian calendar and commemorates the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is often observed as a time of reflection and spiritual preparation.
- For many older people, this may be an important religious observance.

Activity ideas:

- Providing access to a service (in-person or virtual)
- Quiet prayer or reflection time
- Listening to hymns or religious readings
- Offering palm crosses or symbolic items where appropriate



CELEBRATING WORKFORCE HARMONY WEEK

Workforce reflections

Cultural and religious observances such as St Patrick's Day, Eid al-Fitr, Nowruz and Palm Sunday provide an opportunity to recognise and value the diversity within the aged care workforce. Many staff may have personal, cultural or spiritual connections to these occasions, which can influence how they experience and engage with their work during this time.

Acknowledging these celebrations in the workplace can help foster a sense of inclusion, respect and belonging. It also creates opportunities for shared learning, where staff can exchange cultural knowledge and experiences in a supportive environment.

Common approaches may include:

- Acknowledging significant cultural and religious dates within teams
- Creating space for staff to share their traditions and experiences
- Recognising the importance of flexibility where possible during observances
- Encouraging respectful conversations and cultural awareness

Activity ideas:

- Inviting staff to share stories, traditions or foods linked to these occasions
- Displaying a simple cultural calendar or information board
- Hosting a small team gathering that reflects diverse celebrations
- Encouraging peer learning through informal discussions

Practice considerations:

- Be mindful that not all staff may wish to participate or share
- Respect individual beliefs, practices and preferences
- Avoid assumptions and be guided by staff comfort
- Recognise cultural diversity as a strength within the workforce

A culturally diverse workforce brings valuable language skills, cultural knowledge and lived experience that support meaningful engagement with older people from CALD backgrounds. Recognising and supporting this diversity contributes to more inclusive workplaces and strengthens the delivery of culturally appropriate, person-centred care.



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

CULTURE, VALUES &

ATTITUDES WEBINAR SERIES

Our Culture, Values & Attitudes Webinar Series supports aged care providers to build capability in delivering culturally appropriate care for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The series forms part of our broader training and capacity-building work under the PICAC program, offering structured learning that can be applied in everyday practice.

The webinars explore how culture shapes values, attitudes and behaviours, and how these influence care delivery, communication and decision-making. Sessions draw on the practice experience of our trainers, informed by ongoing work with aged care providers and CALD communities.

All content is aligned with the Aged Care Quality Standards and the Aged Care Diversity Framework, and applies a Cultural Intelligence (CQ) approach to support providers to translate these into practice.

Key themes discussed include:

- Practical strategies to support culturally appropriate care
- Real-world examples and scenarios from service delivery
- Reflection on how culture influences care interactions and outcomes

Target Audience

- Aged care staff and volunteers
- Managers and team leaders
- Providers seeking to strengthen culturally inclusive practice

[Click here to access our Culture Values and Attitudes Webinar Series](#)



MICRO-LEARNING SESSIONS

DIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Our Micro-Learning Sessions provide flexible, bite-sized learning opportunities designed to support culturally inclusive practice in aged and community care. These sessions are developed to complement our broader training and capacity-building work, offering focused learning that can be easily integrated into busy workplace settings.

Sessions are delivered live or pre-recorded and are designed to be short, focused, and practical, drawing on the practice experience of our trainers gained through years of working alongside aged care providers and CALD communities.

All micro-learning content is underpinned by the Aged Care Quality Standards and the Aged Care Diversity Framework, and applies a Cultural Intelligence (CQ) approach to support providers to translate policy and regulatory requirements into everyday practice. Sessions usually include:

- Practical strategies to support culturally inclusive care
- Case examples informed by real-world service delivery
- Reflections on applying standards and the Diversity Framework in different care contexts

Target Audience

- Aged Care Staff and Volunteers
- Managers and Team Leaders
- Providers seeking flexible workforce learning options

[Click here to access our Micro-Learning](#)



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

MULTICULTURAL CALENDAR 2026

Multicultural Calendar 2026

National public holidays **State and Territory public holidays**
 * Dates, Jewish and Muslim events start at sunset the previous evening
 † Dates may vary from what is listed
 Information contained within this document was correct at the time of publication

January **February** **March**

April **May** **June**

July **August** **September**

October **November** **December**

PICAC alliance **Multicultural Aged Care**

Centre of Excellence In Cultural Diversity and Inclusion

Introducing the Multicultural Calendar, your essential tool for embracing diversity and inclusion year-round! This comprehensive calendar is a vibrant tapestry of dates, celebrating various Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) events throughout the year. It's designed for anyone working with CALD and multicultural communities, as well as anyone interested in broadening their cultural horizons.

[Download our Multicultural Calendar 2026 here](#)

CELEBRATING GEORGE

HONOURING A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

The Chair of MAC Board of Management, Mr George Genimahaliotis has been named the Highly Commended Finalist Senior Volunteer Award at the 2025 Governor's Multicultural Awards, recognising more than five decades of outstanding voluntary service to South Australia's multicultural communities, with a particular focus on supporting culturally and linguistically diverse seniors.

Presented by Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia, the award acknowledges George's lifelong commitment to strengthening community cohesion, preserving cultural heritage, and improving outcomes for older South Australians from multicultural backgrounds.

Mr Genimahaliotis has dedicated over 50 years to voluntary leadership across a wide range of Greek, Macedonian, Pontian and broader multicultural organisations. His service has included senior leadership and governance roles at the local, state and national level, helping to build strong, sustainable community institutions that continue to serve thousands of people across South Australia.

A key aspect of George's contribution has been his advocacy for multicultural seniors and aged care. As a founding member and current Chair of the Multicultural Aged Care Board, and a member of the National Older Persons Reference Group, he has worked to ensure that the voices and needs of culturally and linguistically diverse older Australians are represented in policy, planning and service delivery.

In addition to his aged-care advocacy, George has played a central role in promoting cultural understanding and community participation through long-standing involvement in major cultural festivals and events, including the ****Dimitria Greek Festival****, as well as through education, language preservation and welfare initiatives.

He is also the President Greek Ex Servicemen Association of SA and President Greek Macedonian Brotherhood "Alexander The Great" Inc and a long term active member of the Pan Macedonia Association where he runs the kafenio every Saturday morning for the Greek seniors



YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

We'd love to hear from you! Share your family traditions, favourite recipes, or special cultural stories so we can feature them in next month's edition.

Callout for ideas:

- Tell us how your family celebrates!
- Share your recipe or story for next month's edition.
- Email us at macsa@mac.org.au with your ideas.

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MORE INFORMATION

Phone

08 8241 9900

Email

macsa@mac.org.au



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Website

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