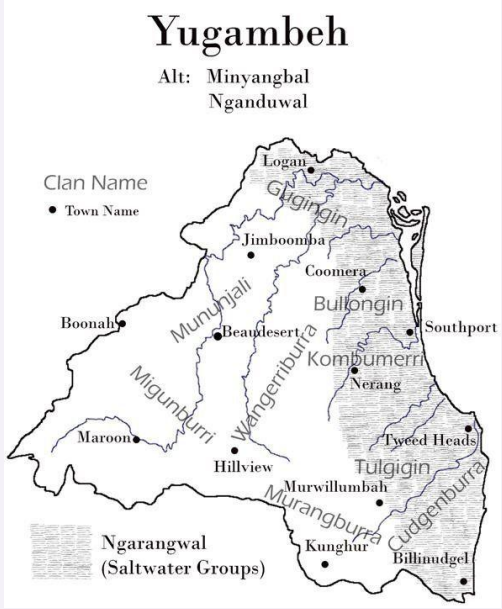
STAND UP SPEAK OUT

27-29 JULY 2026

2026 AUSTRALIAN ELDER ABUSE CONFERENCE

Acknowledgement of Country

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, their diversity, histories and knowledge and their continuing connections to land and community. We pay our respects to all Australian Indigenous Peoples and their cultures, and to Elders of past and present.



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LGBTI older people in aged care: affirming sexuality, gender, and cultural safety.

Michael Frommer — Policy and Research Lead – Ageing for LGBTQIA+ Health Australia

Chris Hunt — Ambo and intrepid water baby

Gary White — Digital Creator and Master of Ceremony

Fran Mulcahy — Poet performer and sailor

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The Human Rights Framework

■ Dignity as a Safeguard

Authentic self-expression is central to safety.

■ Historical Trauma

Past discrimination creates institutional distrust.

■ Safety is Active

Visible inclusion prevents withdrawal.

Safety must be seen as well as felt.
Visible inclusion reduces vulnerability.

Systemic Vulnerabilities

■ Fear of Re-Closeting

Residents may hide identity.

■ Social Isolation

Fewer family advocates.

■ Healthcare Mistrust

Delayed reporting and care.

Isolation and mistrust increase abuse risk.

Identity, Language & Rights

■ Privacy
Respect choice.

■ Inclusive Language
Correct names and pronouns.

■ Chosen Family
Recognise advocates.

■ Intersex Awareness
Protect autonomy and privacy

Respecting identity is abuse prevention.

Institutional Cultural Safety

■ Challenge Assumptions

Avoid heteronormative defaults.

■ Visible Signals

Display inclusive symbols.

■ Training

Whole workforce responsibility.

■ Zero Tolerance

Respond immediately.

Culture change requires every staff member.

Practical Safeguards

■ Inclusive Forms
Capture identity respectfully.

■ Reflective Spaces
Inclusive media and libraries.

■ Privacy
Protect dignity during care.

■ Community
Connect with LGBTI supports.

■ Key Anchor
Small visible cues encourage disclosure.

Small actions create safer organisations

Australian Government
Australian Institute of Family Studies

AIFS

Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

Queerspace

National Elder Abuse Research Program: The abuse and mistreatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and/or asexual (LGBTIQA+) older people

Research snapshot

May 2026

LGBTIQA+ older people reported higher rates of abuse and mistreatment (21%–27%) than the 15% of people aged 65 years or older in the general population, when focusing on the 5 abuse types identified by the National Prevalence Study.

Proportion of older people reporting having experienced at least 1 form of abuse

Financial abuse | Physical abuse | Sexual abuse | Emotional abuse | Neglect

+ Discrimination, included in the LGBTIQA+ survey

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Cultural Safety

- What does “culturally safe” and “culturally appropriate” care look like for us as individuals?
- Visual cues DO matter
- Staff attitudes DO matter

  BUT

- So DO actions!

Rainbow Tick

Quality Innovation Performance ACCREDITED

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Supporting LGBTI residents

- Sexuality and intimacy needs
- Avoiding discrimination, infringement of human rights, and/or potential abuse
- Practical and ethical challenges:

    * Consent
    * Decision making capacity
    * Privacy/confidentiality

READY
TO LISTEN

The #ReadyToListen Charter of Sexual Rights and Responsibilities in Residential Aged Care

Written by
Dr Catherine Barrett and Yumi Lee
May 2022

OPAN Older Persons Advocacy Network
celebrateageing Building respect for older people
OWN

SILVER RAINBOW

The Silver Rainbow program aims to improve the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people as they age and enter the Australian aged care system.

This factsheet is for aged care workers to provide guidance on how to identify and respond to the abuse, neglect and mistreatment of LGBT people in aged care. It does not provide information on intersex people, because elder abuse aspects for intersex people can be very different to those in LGBT communities (see Intersex People and Ageing factsheet).

Please refer to the LGBTI 101 factsheet for a glossary of terms and information on resources and support services. The abuse, neglect and mistreatment of older people will be referred to as elder abuse throughout the factsheet.

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LGBT People and Elder Abuse

What is elder abuse?

The World Health Organisation defines elder abuse as something that happens where there is a **relationship of trust between an older person and another person, and the other person does something that causes harm or distress to the older person**.

There are lots of types of elder abuse. Sometimes more than one type of abuse can happen at the same time. It can be intentional or unintentional and can occur once, or many times. Elder abuse is often done by people who are close to the older person, people they know and trust. They might be partners, children, grandchildren, other family members, friends, neighbours or carers.

LGBTIQ+ HEALTH AUSTRALIA

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Agency with Risk

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Those cultural Icons

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