NAVIGATING THE AGED CARE MAZE

A guide to understanding and accessing aged care services in Brisbane and the Gold Coast

Produced by GOC Care’s Community Partners Program
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Navigating the Aged Care Maze aims to help people of Greek speaking background in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast navigate the aged care system easily. It has been compiled as part of GOC Care’s Community Partners Program, Thesmi, which was established to improve access to aged care services for families and seniors of Greek speaking background.

Navigating the Aged Care Maze provides information about a variety of aged care options and important services in Brisbane and the Gold Coast. It covers the two basic types of aged care services, Community Care, which helps older people manage daily living activities at home, and Residential Care, which offers care in an aged care facility if living at home has become too difficult to manage.

As well as community and residential care, this booklet provides information about:

- the assessment required to access aged care services
- support services for carers
- options if you are waiting for a place in residential care
- legal considerations in aged care, and
- support available through the Greek Orthodox Community, in particular, GOC Care

There is a detailed list of useful contacts and resources at the back of the booklet, which includes contact details for all the services mentioned throughout the booklet and a few additional helpful resources.

Navigating the Aged Care Maze is arranged into clear, colour-coded sections, so finding information is simple. You may read the booklet from start to finish, or alternatively you may refer only to those sections you are interested in.

Additional tips, advice, or questions to consider are included in coloured boxes throughout.

We wish you good luck as you begin navigating the aged care maze.

The Thesmi project team,
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WHY HAVE YOUR NEEDS ASSESSED?

Having your needs assessed is often a first step to accessing aged care services. Many services require an assessment of some kind to determine your needs and to see whether they can assist you to meet those needs. Assessments also help you to understand what your aged care needs are and what assistance is available.

AGED CARE ASSESSMENT TEAMS (ACATS)

ACAT Assessment Teams (ACATs) have Commonwealth Government responsibility to assess and approve people for certain aged care services. You will need to have an ACAT assessment before you can access:

- some community care services (more information on page 5)
- residential aged care (more information on page 10)
- respite in a residential aged care home (more information on page 7)

ACAT teams are comprised of health care professionals such as doctors, nurses, social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and psychologists who have specific qualifications or experience in aged care issues. One or two health care professionals will visit you to do the assessment, either at your home or in hospital. The ACAT team will be able to give you information and advice about the kind of services and care you may need and what is available in your area.

An ACAT assessment is valid for 12 months. Having an assessment does not mean you have to go ahead and use an aged care service, but it does mean that you can access services if you need to in the next 12 months.

You or your family can contact an ACAT team directly to arrange an assessment or you may be referred by your doctor, local hospital or community care service provider.

The Commonwealth Carelink Centre (ph 1800 052 222) can help you find the ACAT team closest to you. GOC Care (ph 3844 3669) may also be able to assist you to organise an ACAT assessment.

The waiting time for an ACAT assessment tends to vary and priority is given to urgent situations. Waiting times can be as long as 12 weeks.

SPECIALISTS: GERIATRICIANS, PSYCHOGERIATRICIANS & NEUROLOGISTS

A range of specialists can provide assessments and advice in aged care. These include:

- **Geriatrician**: Medical doctor specialising in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disorders that occur in the aged, and with care of the aged
- **Psychogeriatrician**: A psychiatrist who specialises in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental disorders occurring in the aged
- **Neurologist**: Specialises in the structure, functioning and diseases of the nervous system. May be involved in the assessment of dementia.

Your GP can give you a referral to the appropriate specialist. Most specialists are based in major hospitals and medical centres. They can be accessed through both the public and private health systems.
Living in the comfort of your own home is an important part of growing older, particularly within a traditional Greek culture. There are a number of programs available to help with daily living activities that may have become harder for you to manage on your own. This is called ‘community care’.

**TYPES OF COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES**

*Home and Community Care (HACC) services (basic care needs)*
- comprehensive range of basic maintenance and support services for frail aged people, people with a disability and their carers
- coordinated and integrated services include community nursing, domestic assistance, personal care, allied health care, social support, meals on wheels, home modification and maintenance, transport, and community-based respite care

*Community Aged Care Packages (CACP) (more complex care needs)*
- caters for people with higher level care needs than HACC services
- packages of services are individually planned and coordinated for you
- packages could include assistance with bathing, dressing, meal preparation, laundry, gardening, transport assistance, and support services to maintain personal affairs
- CACPs do not include nursing services

*Extended Aged Care at Home Packages (EACH) (higher level care needs)*
- provides more assistance than a Community Aged Care Package (CACP), and include a wide range of personal and medical assistance
- are highly flexible and individually planned and coordinated for you
- may include: clinical care (such as nursing services); personal assistance (such as bathing, shopping or household tasks); assistance with nutrition and meal preparation; continence management; emotional support; a range of therapies and mobility equipment, and home maintenance and modification

*Extended Aged Care at Home – Dementia Packages (EACH D) (higher level care needs with dementia)*
- provides an individually tailored package if you or someone you care for needs assistance because of behavioural problems associated with dementia
- provides the same full range of services as EACH packages (above), plus additional services and support with regard to the behaviour and psychological symptoms of dementia

*Transition care (may be useful if you been in hospital and need extra support to recover once you go home)*
- aims at helping you improve independence and confidence after a hospital stay
- may include: low intensity therapy (e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietetics, podiatry, speech therapy, counseling and social work); nursing care, and/or personal care (e.g. assistance with showering, dressing, eating and eating aids, managing continence, transport to appointments, moving, walking and communication)
- gives you and your family or carer time to consider your long-term arrangements, which may include returning home with community support or accessing the level of care provided by an aged care home
- average transition care time is eight weeks and the maximum is 12 weeks. (In certain circumstances you might get an extension of another six weeks, making a total of 18 weeks)
SOME QUESTIONS WHICH MAY HELP WHEN CONSIDERING COMMUNITY CARE

• Is non-medical assistance such as shopping, cooking, paying bills and the like necessary?
• Is help required to ensure that medications are not forgotten?
• Is help required with activities of daily living eg. cleaning, washing, gardening?
• For how many hours a day do you need help?
• Is your home safe or can it be modified to be safe? eg. bathroom railings, stair railings etc.
• Is the kitchen safe? eg. are there gas appliances that must be lit?
• Is there a way to summon help if you fall and can’t get up?
• What support are the family realistically able to provide? What other obligations and demands do they have (eg children, work, travel time etc)?
• How long are you comfortable being on your own for?
• Are family or community members available in case of an emergency?

HOW DO I ACCESS COMMUNITY CARE?

To discuss your community care needs and options, speak to your doctor or social worker, or contact GOC Care (ph 3844 3669).

CACPs, EACH and EACH D packages: (ie those catering for complex and higher care needs): Your eligibility for these services is determined by an ACAT Team. The ACAT team will assess your needs and your eligibility for these packages and advise you of the type of package appropriate for you. Note that assessments for CACPs packages must be done in the home, not in hospital.

Home and Community Care (HACC) services: The organisation you approach for HACC services (ie the ‘service provider’) will undertake an assessment of your needs and discuss your eligibility with you. You do not require an ACAT assessment for HACC services.

Transition Care: To be eligible for transition care you must be an older person and an in-patient of a hospital, and you must have completed your hospital care. While you are still in hospital you need to be assessed by an ACAT team as someone who would benefit from transition care. This process is initiated by hospital staff, who also organize the transition care services for you before you leave the hospital.

To find community care services in your area, contact the Commonwealth Carelink Centre (ph 1800 052 222). Your ACAT assessment team may be able to advise of appropriate services in your area, or you may contact GOC Care on 3844 3669 for assistance.

WILL I HAVE TO PAY FOR COMMUNITY CARE?

Most community care service providers will charge you a fee as a contribution to the cost of your care. This will usually depend on your income and the particular services you use.

Home and Community Care (HACC) services may make special arrangements if you cannot afford to pay. Access to CACP, EACH, EACH D and Transition Care packages is determined by need, not ability to pay fees, so you will not be denied a service that you need if you cannot pay the fee.

ACAT assessments are free of charge.
Respite care provides a chance for carers and the person they care for to take a break. This may be for a few hours, days or longer periods, depending on your needs and what services are available. Respite services can be provided at home for a few hours at a time, or be at facilities such as day care centres and aged care homes.

WHAT IS A CARER?
Many aged people (or those with a disability, mental illness or chronic illness) have a family member or friend who provides care to help them continue to live at home. Government and service providers often refer to those family and friends as carers. If you are a carer you may be eligible for a number of Commonwealth Government support services as well as some financial assistance. (see p. 9)

TYPES OF RESPITE CARE

In-home care: A care-worker can come to your house to provide care, or can take the person you care for on an outing while you stay at home, allowing you to take a break for a few hours at a time.

Day respite: This is usually provided at a day respite centre and may involve half-day, full-day or an extended day (‘long day care’) respite. Day respite centres provide activities and sometimes outings that may be of interest to older people. Transport to and from the respite centre may also be available.

Residential respite in an aged care home: Short-term care is available in some aged care homes for people who need care temporarily, generally in blocks of one to six weeks. Respite care in aged care homes may be used on a planned or emergency basis to help with carer stress, illness, holidays, or non-availability of the carer for any other reason. Access to residential respite requires an ACAT (Aged Care Assessment Team) assessment. You may have 63 days of residential respite care in a year, with the possibility of extensions of 21 days at a time if this is considered necessary by your ACAT team.

Overnight or weekend respite in a community setting: Overnight or weekend care may be available in a community respite house that accommodates a small number of older people at a time. (Note the availability of this type of respite is limited to a small number of community respite houses.)

Emergency respite: If you have a genuine emergency on your hands (for example, you’re admitted into hospital) and are unable to care for your family member, 24-hour emergency respite services will be able to help. Call your local Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre on 1800 059 059.
HOW DO I ACCESS RESPITE CARE?
The Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre (ph 1800 059 059) can provide information about respite services and other services to help carers, and can also help locate respite options that meet your needs. Other good ways to find out about respite services include talking with your doctor or your ACAT (Aged Care Assessment Team), or contacting GOC Care (ph 3844 3669).

Access to respite care is based on priority and need. For this reason, an assessment is undertaken to ensure that the carer and person requiring care are eligible for support. This may be done by the respite service provider or the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre. The amount of care you receive is negotiated and will depend on your needs and eligibility, and the availability of respite care services.

Remember that you need an ACAT assessment before you can access respite care in a residential aged care home.

COSTS OF RESPITE CARE
Community-based respite services generally require you to pay a contribution or fee towards the cost of the service. These can vary from a sessional fee in a day respite centre to an hourly rate for in-home respite. Your ability to pay is also taken into account.

People who receive respite in aged care homes funded by government are required to pay a small daily fee. Some aged care homes may also charge a booking fee. (If you are a carer and have made a booking through the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre, no booking fee is charged.)

Carers who are concerned about the cost of residential respite can discuss this with staff at the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre as special arrangements can be made in some circumstances.
Caring for someone at home is often challenging, especially if the person you are caring for is no longer able to provide basic care for themselves. Carers may push themselves to the limit to look after the needs of their loved one, but forget that they themselves need support to keep going. Feelings of social isolation, tiredness, and being stretched between the demands of work and family, are common amongst those caring for older family members or friends at home.

NATIONAL RESPIE FOR CARERS PROGRAM (NRCP)
The National Respite for Carers Program (NRCP) is a government initiative that offers a range of support to help if you are caring for someone living at home. These include:

• Access to subsidised respite services;
• Support from Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres (ph 1800 059 059), who help you locate and organise respite services and other support you may need;
• Carers Qld Resource Centre (ph 1800 242 636), providing carers with information and advice about their caring role as well as telephone and personal counseling for stress related issues, grief and coping skills.

OTHER CARER SUPPORT SERVICES
The following services either directly support carers or provide indirect support by assisting the person they care for:

• Carer support groups and counseling services
• Community nursing and health centres
• Meals on wheels and other food services
• Domestic help and personal care
• Home modifications and maintenance
• Transport services such as Council Cabs and the Qld Transport subsidy scheme
• Dementia support services such as those provided by Alzheimer’s Australia (Qld)

Speak to the Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre (ph 1800 059 059), Carers Qld Resource Centre (ph 1800 242 636), your doctor, ACAT team or GOC Care (ph 3844 3669) for more information about services to help you care for someone in their home.

Contact details for Council Cabs, the Taxi Subsidy Scheme and Alzheimer’s Australia (Qld) can be found in the Contacts and useful resources section of this booklet (p. 20).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR CARERS: CARER PAYMENT AND CARER ALLOWANCE
Financial assistance is available from Centrelink to help you if you are caring for someone living at home. This includes:

• The Carer Payment: An income support payment (similar to a pension) for people whose caring responsibilities prevent them from significantly participating in the workforce. The Carer Payment is income tested and assets tested. The carer is not required to live with the person being cared for, but must provide constant care.

• The Carer Allowance: Provides an income supplement for people who provide daily care and attention at home for an adult or child with a disability or severe medical condition or a person who is frail aged. When caring for an adult, the carer is not required to live with the person they are caring for. There is no income test or assets test for the Carer Allowance.

Talk to Centrelink (ph 13 2717) for further information about the Carer Payment and Carer Allowance. If English is your second language, call Centrelink’s multilingual service on 13 1202.
If you can no longer live at home because of ageing, illness or disability, you may be able to access places in aged care homes. This is called ‘residential aged care’. Moving to an aged care home is not usually something people choose to do; it usually comes about because of a crisis, ill health or disability. It has also not generally been a culturally appropriate option for the Greek community, however this is changing as more families are working full-time and have financial commitments that necessitate working, and the needs of loved ones necessitate higher levels of care.

**SOME BENEFITS OF LIVING IN AGED CARE FACILITIES**

- Staff are on hand 24 hours a day and are trained to in working effectively with older people
- There is increased social interaction compared with living at home. In addition to the residents themselves, there are planned activities, staff, visitors and often pets
- The facilities are designed to accommodate the needs of older people and are inherently safer than the home
- Independence of the senior is encouraged
- Many facilities are set up as homes and are welcoming and warm environments
- All aged care facilities must meet accreditation requirements to receive government funding, which implies that they meet strict criteria on many aspects of care

**TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE**

There are two types of residential aged care facilities (or “aged care homes”):

**Low-care residential facilities (also known as hostels)**

- provide low-level care for people who need some help with daily living but who can walk or move about on their own, and who have a level of independence with their own self-care.

**High-care residential facilities (also known as nursing homes)**

- offer high-level care for people who need 24-hour nursing care and a high level of assistance with daily living activities.

Some aged care homes offer both high-care and low-care facilities, while others specialise in one or the other.
ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

Additional options within residential care facilities which may meet your needs include:

**Aging in place:** Aging in place allows a low-care resident in an aged care home to remain in the same facility when their needs become more high-care. If a residential facility offers aging in place, low-care residents with those places are guaranteed that they do not have to move to a different facility as their needs increase. Ask the facility how many low-care places are set aside for aging in place.

**Secure dementia unit:** While all residential aged care facilities cater for residents with dementia, some facilities have areas that have been specifically designed for people with dementia. These areas are often called “secure dementia units” because they are secure to ensure the safety of residents who are prone to “wander”. Secure dementia units may be found in either high-care or low-care facilities. Ask the facility if they have a secure dementia area.

**Extra services:** All homes have to provide the same level of care to their residents. Some aged care homes, both high-care and low care, may offer an “extra services” option where residents can choose to pay an additional daily fee to receive a higher standard of food, accommodation and services. For example, a resident may receive a bigger room, a wider choice of meals, or wine with meals. It’s best to check costs and services offered directly with the aged care home as this varies from home to home. Extra-services facilities may also charge an accommodation bond. (See page 16 for an explanation of accommodation bonds.)
HOW DO I GET INTO A RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITY?

The importance of planning ahead

The process of moving into an aged care home is complex and often takes much longer than people imagine. Putting some things in place now, even if you don’t believe you will ever need it, can make a big difference if there is a sudden and unexpected health change. Planning ahead, rather than waiting until there is an urgent need to move, may save you a great deal of time, heartache and stress.

1. You’ll need an ACAT assessment

Before a person can become a resident of an aged care home – whether a hostel or a nursing home – they must be assessed by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). The ACAT team will assess your needs and advise you of the type of residential care most appropriate for you. It can take anywhere from 48 hours to 12 weeks to obtain an ACAT assessment.

2. Find a selection of aged care homes and put your name on their waiting list

Most aged care homes have waiting lists, which can sometimes be as long as 18 months or two years. This often shocks people in the community, especially if they have found themselves unexpectedly and urgently needing a place for themselves or a family member to go. Aged care homes offer places when they have vacancies. When a place becomes available, they decide on who to accept based on the level of priority of the person’s needs and whether they can provide for the person’s particular care needs.

After you have had an ACAT assessment and been approved to go to an aged care facility, you will need to find a selection of places that can cater for your needs and that you feel you would be happy moving to, then put in an application with each to get your name on their waiting lists.

If you are moving into an aged care home from you own home, you may apply to as many aged care homes as you wish. When a place becomes available, the aged care home will contact you and you can decide if you wish to accept the place at that time. If you reject the place, you may still be able to keep your name on the list and ask to be contacted again at a later time.

If you are going to an aged care home from a hospital, there is a government requirement that you must select a minimum of five aged care homes and list with them. This should be done as soon as possible after the ACAT approval. You should not list at any facility which you would not feel comfortable going to as you will be expected to accept the first vacancy offered to you. You/your relatives or friends should remain in regular (fortnightly) contact with the facilities on your list until a vacancy has been found.

While you are waiting for a place to come up...

If you are in hospital waiting for a place to come up in a nursing home (ie high-care facility) you may be able to move to an interim care facility, which will provide nursing-home level care while you wait. You need to have listed at five places before you can go to interim care. (See p. 17 for more information on interim care. Note only a small number of hospitals offer interim care.)
Finding a suitable aged care home

You will need to visit a number of aged care homes to decide which ones you feel comfortable with. This process can be time consuming and frustrating, particularly if your situation is urgent and you need to find a place quickly.

Some service providers may be able to suggest appropriate aged care homes for your needs. (Service providers include hospitals, doctors, community care providers such as GOC Care, ACATs, social workers, etc). However many service providers do not provide this support. Recommendations from family and friends may help you find a facility suitable to your needs. Also asking aged care homes themselves which other facilities they would suggest (if they themselves are unable to meet your needs) could prove useful.

Commonwealth Carelink Centres (ph 1800 052 222) can provide you with information about aged care homes in your area and the types of services they offer. Alternatively the DPS Guide to Aged Care, which lists all residential aged care facilities in Qld, is available from www.agedcareguide.com.au. GOC Care (ph 3844 3669) may be able to assist you in this process.

Know what the person going to the aged care home wants in a facility

Moving to an inappropriate aged care facility can cause unnecessary distress for both the senior and their family. It is important that the person moving to the home be involved in deciding what their needs are and where they would like to go. Families and carers should be careful of assuming they know what the person they are caring for wants.

Check accreditation of the aged care home

All aged care homes that receive Commonwealth Government funding must be accredited by the government and must reach certain aged care standards. Doing a quick check of the accreditation report for an aged care home can show you whether the government has any concerns about the facility. Phone the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency (ph 3852 3100) or go to their website www.accreditation.org.au to read reports.
QUESTIONS TO ASK AND THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR WHEN CHOOSING AN AGED CARE HOME

• Does the home seem welcoming, both for yourself and your relatives/friends?
• Can family and friends visit at any time, and are they encouraged to join activities?
• Is the location convenient to allow regular visits by family and friends? Is it close to public transport if needed?
• What is the attitude of the staff towards the residents? Are residents treated as individuals, and with courtesy and respect?
• What level of interaction is there between staff and residents? Between residents?
• Are single rooms available or will you have to share? Are there options to move to single rooms later if you want to, and if so, when?
• What are the rooms and amenities like? Do they seem comfortable and well maintained?
• Is the place clean and fresh? eg. are there any unpleasant odours?
• What furnishings and personal items can you bring, and what is supplied?
• Are bathrooms shared or are there ensuites?
• Can you have your own private telephone? TV?
• Can you have access to satellite television for Greek TV?
• What training do the staff have, eg. registered nurses? trained carers? How many staff provide care during the day? During the night?
• Can the home meet your specific care needs? What kinds of care or services cannot be provided?
• Are staff mostly long term or mostly agency (ie temporary) staff?
• Are the staff trained in caring for people from diverse cultural backgrounds?
• What resources do staff have to help them communicate with people who speak a language other than English?
• Are there any other Greeks there, either residents or staff?
• Is the facility able to meet your cultural/social/religious needs? How do they find out what your cultural/social/religious needs are?
• Are there regular outings and activities?
• Can you continue with a hobby or interest?
• What are meal arrangements – menus, special diets, meals in your room, visitors, times, seating?
• Is it important for you that the facility provide culturally appropriate food on regular occasions?
• Can families bring food in for their relatives?
• What provisions are there for married couples?
• Is it secure for a person who might wander?
• Do they offer services such as physiotherapy, hairdressing, podiatry, etc?
• Can residents have their own doctor visit?
• Are there open, comfortable, welcoming common areas?
• Is there easy access to a well maintained outdoor area?
• Do you understand the costs and agreements associated with care?
• How long is the waiting list and does this meet your needs?
• Is there the opportunity for aging in place?
3. Apply to the residential homes to get your name on their waiting lists

You will need to fill in an application form for any facility you apply for. This can be very detailed and will usually ask questions of a personal nature. This helps the facilities to understand your particular needs and be able to determine, when the next available place comes up, whether that place will help you to receive the level of care that you need.

A generic application form that you can photocopy, sign and send to a number of residential homes, can be obtained from your ACAT team, the Aged Care Information Line (ph 1800 500 853), Commonwealth Carelink Centres (ph 1800 052 222) or the Department of Health and Ageing Website www.health.gov.au/ageing - follow the links to forms to find the Application for Entry for Respite Care or Permanent Entry to a Nursing Home.

You will need to include a copy of your ACAT assessment when sending your application form to residential facilities.

4. Accepting a place at a residential home when it becomes available

When you are offered a vacancy, the process moves very quickly: the home will usually ask that the new resident be transferred to their care within 24 hours or 48 hours.

The facility will ask that you complete more paperwork, and you will also be offered a resident agreement, which is a formal agreement between you and the aged care home. The agreement should set out:

- The terms of your residency (including financial obligations)
- Your rights and responsibilities
- The rights and responsibilities of the aged care home.

Ask the facility to go through the agreement with you and explain anything you do not understand. You might also want to show the resident agreement to family, friends, a financial advisor or legal practitioner before you sign the agreement.

What if I am not happy with the home after I have moved in?

Most facilities have procedures to address complaints and resolve issues raised by residents or their families. However if you are not happy with a facility, it is possible to transfer to another facility at a later date. This will depend on vacancies and on how urgent your needs are compared with others waiting for a vacancy.

COSTS OF RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE: FEES AND CHARGES

The Commonwealth Government sets the fees and charges that residential aged care facilities can charge. The fees and charges you pay are linked to your income and assets, whether or not you are a pensioner, and your level of care.

Assets assessment

Anyone moving to a residential aged care facility subsidised by the Commonwealth Government must apply to Centrelink (or the Department of Veterans Affairs if you receive DVA income support payments) for an Assets Assessment. This assessment will determine the types of accommodation payments you are required to pay.

You can obtain a Request for an Assets Assessment Form by contacting the Aged Care Information Line (1800 500 853) or the Commonwealth Carelink Centre (1800 052 222), anytime after you have had your ACAT assessment. Forward the completed form to Centrelink (or the Department of Veterans Affairs) as soon as possible after you get your ACAT assessment. You can take the form to your nearest Centrelink office or mail it to the central assessment centre in Victoria. The mailing address will be on the back of the form.

For more information about the assets assessment for residential care fees, call the Centrelink Aged Care Assessment Team on 1800 227 475, or, if you are a veteran, call the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (ph 13 3254) for further information. Full information regarding the assets assessment process can be found by reading the supplementary information booklet that accompanies the Request for an Assets Assessment Form.
Types of fees and charges

There are two types of fees and charges that you may be asked to pay:

- daily care fees (income based)
- accommodation payments (asset based)

1. Daily Care fees (income based)

- Full-pensioners pay the basic daily care fee, which amounts to approximately 85% of the single rate pension.
- Part-pensioners and self-funded retirees will be charged extra fees based on the income they earn. These fees are calculated by Centrelink.

2. Accommodation payments (asset based payments)

If your assets exceed an amount set by the Australian Government, you may be asked to pay an accommodation payment.

There are two types of accommodation payments. You may be required to pay either:

- an accommodation charge (for high-level care/nursing home residents), or
- an accommodation bond (for low-level care/hostel residents, or residents in an extra services place)

How much you pay is agreed with the aged care facility when you move in.

For more information about the fees and charges associated with residential care, phone the Aged Care Information Line (ph 1800 500 853).

Answering your questions about residential aged care fees and charges

What about the family home?

The family home is exempt from the assets test if:

1. a spouse or dependant child is still living in the home;
2. a close family member has lived in the home for at least five years and is eligible for a Centrelink income support payment; or
3. a carer has lived in the home for at least two years and receives income support payment.
4. If the spouse, carer or family member leaves after the person has entered care, the home is exempt under certain circumstances.

If you are renting out your family home and are either accruing a liability to pay an accommodation charge (high care/nursing home residents) or paying an accommodation bond by periodic installments (low care/hostel residents), then all rent earned is exempt from the pension income test and the residential care fee income test.

In addition, the value of the family home will be exempt under the pension's assets test. Check with Centrelink for further details - Call 13 2300 to make an appointment with a Centrelink Financial Information Service Officer.

What if I can’t afford to pay?

If you have genuine difficulty paying the fees and charges for residential aged care, there are government provisions that may allow your fees and charges to be reduced or waived. Contact the Aged Care Information Line (ph. 1800 500 853) to discuss whether you may be eligible to receive this assistance and to obtain an application form, called an Application for Financial Hardship form.

Payments for couples?

Couples (if both partners require residential care) will need to approach Centrelink to request a medical separation of pensions so that Centrelink will pay the two pensions at the single, highest, rate.

GET FINANCIAL AND LEGAL ADVICE

Before you make a final decision about moving into an aged care home, you may wish to check with your own financial advisers and legal representatives.
If you are in hospital and need a placement in an aged care home but one is not immediately available, and if family and carers are unable to provide the amount of care you require while you are waiting, you may be able to access interim care.

Interim care involves provision of nursing care in the interim care unit of a hospital, until you are offered a place in a residential aged care home.

Some hospitals have their own internal interim care unit, however most Brisbane hospitals will transfer patients to Mt Olivet Hospital’s Interim Care Unit. Mt Olivet is funded by the government to provide this service. There may be other interim care options for Veterans.

ACCESSING INTERIM CARE

To go to an interim care unit, you must:

• be in hospital and be unable to return home to wait for a residential care place
• require a greater level of care that can be provided in your home
• have listed at a minimum of five nursing homes and be willing to accept the first vacancy that is offered.

If you are coming to interim care from a public hospital, you need to have been assessed as high-care by an ACAT team.

If you are a Veteran and are in receipt of a health card, e.g. Gold Card, you need to have been assessed as (at least) low-care by an ACAT team.

If you are coming from a private hospital, you may not require an ACAT assessment to access interim care.

COSTS OF INTERIM CARE

If you are transferred to interim care from a public hospital or are a Veteran, there is a patient contribution. The cost would be covered by the sum of the single rate pension plus rent assistance allowance if applicable. At the time of printing, the cost of interim care for public and DVA patients was around $38 per day.

If you are transferred to interim care from a private hospital, the cost of interim care is significantly higher. The cost may vary depending on your health care provider, however you may still pay over $400 per day.

For more information about interim care, talk to your hospital social workers or discharge staff, or contact Mount Olivet Interim Care Unit on ph 3240 1213.
ENDURING POWER OF ATTORNEY

If there comes a time when you are unable to manage your own affairs, perhaps because of serious illness or an accident, it may be too late to make your wishes clear to those who will care for you. One important way to provide peace of mind is to legally appoint someone now who will manage your financial and personal/health matters in the future if you are unable to make those decisions yourself. You can do this by making an Enduring Power of Attorney.

An Enduring Power of Attorney is a legal document that you prepare to give someone else the power to make personal and/or financial decisions on your behalf. It is “enduring” because it means that this power continues if you no longer have the capacity to make decisions.

You may appoint one or more people to be your “attorney/s”. This could be a relative, friend, a professional person such as your accountant or lawyer, the Adult Guardian, the Public Trustee or a trustee company. Your attorney/s must be people who you trust and who know and respect your wishes as they will have the power to make major decisions about your health, accommodation and other lifestyle and financial matters. Their decisions will have the same legal force as if you had made the decisions yourself.

Appointing an attorney does not prevent you from continuing to make your own decisions while you are capable of doing so.

If an attorney is found to be incompetent or abusing that power, then the Adult Guardian, an independent statutory officer, has the authority to step in and suspend the powers of the attorney.

For more information or to establish an Enduring Power of Attorney, contact your solicitor, the Public Trustee of Qld (ph 3213 9288 or 1300 651 591), a private trustee company or a Justice of the Peace. Enduring Power of Attorney forms can be downloaded from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General website, [www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian/poa.htm](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian/poa.htm), or purchased from GoPrint, some news agencies and legal stationers.

THE ADULT GUARDIAN

The role of the Adult Guardian, an independent statutory officer, is to protect the rights and interests of adults who are not able to make decisions for themselves. The Adult Guardian may be appointed to make decisions relating to personal (e.g. health, lifestyle) matters on behalf of an adult with impaired capacity when there are no close family members willing, able or competent to act for the adult with impaired capacity.

In addition, the Adult Guardian may also consent to health care treatment for an adult with impaired capacity and will investigate allegations of abuse, exploitation or neglect against an adult.

The Adult Guardian may also make representations, on behalf of the adult, to service providers, government and non-government agencies, and may seek help from them. In situations of dispute between people formally able to make decisions for the adult, the Adult Guardian can informally mediate or help resolve those disputes.

For further information contact the Office of the Adult Guardian (ph 3234 0870) or visit the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General website, [www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian/home.htm](http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/guardian/home.htm).
Parish priests are an important source of support, pastoral care and spiritual guidance for families in difficult times. Priests may be an important resource for families when making decisions about aged care in the family. A full listing of parish priests for Brisbane and the Gold Coast can be found in the Contacts and useful resources section of this booklet.

**GOC CARE SERVICES**

**HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM**

GOC Care's HACC program aims to help elderly people and their carers who are finding it difficult to cope with everyday living at home.

Home and Community Care offers you the following services:

- Home help / Domestic assistance
- Personal care
- Home delivered meals
- Links to other allied health services, home maintenance services and HACC services
- Social support
- Day respite care

**DAY RESPITE CARE CENTRES**

GOC Care Day Respite provides a warm, caring and friendly environment where people can enjoy socialising and participating in various culturally appropriate activities.

Venues:

- Gold Coast Day Respite Centre, 34 Crombie Ave, Bundall, Gold Coast. Ph 5574 0296 Mon and Thurs
- Greek Respite Centre, 36 Browning St, South Brisbane. Ph 3844 3669 Mon to Fri
- Taigum Day Respite Centre, 241 Church Rd, Taigum. Ph 3865 3279 Tues and Thurs

**GOC CARE COMMUNITY AGED CARE PACKAGES (CACP)**

GOC Care's Community Aged Care Packages are planned and managed care services to help older people with complex care needs remain living in their homes. They are designed for each individual and are based on their particular needs.

The types of services available are specific to each person. They could include assistance with bathing, meal preparation, laundry, dressing, transport to appointments, housework and social activities. The services provided are flexible and can change with your needs.

**WELFARE CENTRE**

The welfare centre can offer support to families and carers in times of difficulty.

For more information contact GOC Care (ph 3844 3669).
## CONTACTS AND USEFUL RESOURCES

### ACAT AGED CARE ASSESSMENT TEAMS
- Brisbane North Area: Prince Charles ACAT  
  PH. 3139 4365
- Brisbane Central Area: Royal Brisbane Hospital ACAT  
  PH. 3624 1203
- Brisbane South Area: QEII ACAT  
  PH. 3275 5411
- Gold Coast: Gold Coast ACAT  
  PH. 5519 8412

### AGED CARE INFORMATION LINE
PH. 1800 500 853  
For basic assistance with queries about:  
- home and community care (HACC)  
- residential care  
- fees/bonds/charges associated with residential care

### AGED CARE STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY
PH. 3852 3100 or visit [www.accreditation.org.au](http://www.accreditation.org.au)  
To check the accreditation status and accreditation report for a chosen aged care facility.

### ALZHEIMERS AUSTRALIA (QLD)
PH. 3895 8200 (Brisbane) or 5538 8221 (Gold Coast)  
National Dementia Helpline: 1800 100 500  
[www.alzheimers.org.au](http://www.alzheimers.org.au)  
Aims to reduce the impact of dementia on the community. Services include:  
- Free community information sessions  
- Subsidised education and training programs for family carers and people who work in aged care, respite and community care sectors  
- Special programs for people with early stage dementia  
- Personalised support and counselling for people with dementia and their families  
- Support groups for people living with dementia  
- Dementia and Memory Community Centres

### CARERS QLD RESOURCE CENTRE
PH. 1800 242 636  
Providing information, referrals to services, face to face or telephone counselling, resources, and links to support networks, for carers..

### CENTRELINK
- Financial Information Service Officer: PH. 132 300  
  to make an appointment to discuss financial implications of accessing aged care services  
- Residential care asset assessments: PH. 1800 227 475  
  for help with Request for Assets Assessment forms, necessary for placement in residential aged care facilities  
- Carer Payment and Carer Allowance: PH. 132 717  
  for information on carer benefits  
- Multilingual service: PH. 131 202 for service if English is not your first language

### COMMONWEALTH CARELINK CENTRE
PH. 1800 052 222 or visit [www.commcarelink.health.gov.au](http://www.commcarelink.health.gov.au)  
For information about, and help finding and accessing, the following services in your area:  
- community care  
- respite care  
- carer support  
- aged care homes  
- assessment, including Aged Care Assessment Teams (ACAT)

### COMMONWEALTH CARER RESPITE CENTRE
PH. 1800 059 059  
For information about respite services and carer support services, and for help in locating the appropriate respite and carer support services for your needs.

### COUNCIL CAB SERVICE
- Brisbane: Yellow Cabs PH. 13 6294  
- Gold Coast: Regent Taxis PH. 5588 1234  
Assists older people and people with a disability get to the local shopping centre. Services run at set times. Each one-way trip costs between $1.50 and $3, depending on the area.

### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PH. 133 254  
If you are a veteran, you may call for information about the Assets Assessment when accessing a residential aged care facility.
GOC CARE (BRISBANE)
PH. 3844 3669
For the following services:
• Home and Community Care (HACC) services
• Community Aged Care Packages (CACP)
• Day respite
• Welfare services

GOC CARE (GOLD COAST)
PH. 5574 3920
For the following services:
• Community Aged Care Packages (CACP)
• Day respite. PH. 5574 0296

GOC CARE DAY RESPITE CENTRES (USUALLY OPERATE UNTIL 2PM)
• Greek Respite Centre, 36 Browning St, South Brisbane. PH. 3844 3669 Mon to Fri
• Taigum Day Respite Centre, 241 Church Rd, Taigum. PH. 3865 3279 Tues and Thurs
• Gold Coast Day Respite Centre, 34 Crombie Ave, Bundall, Gold Coast. PH. 5574 0296 Mon and Thurs

OFFICE OF THE ADULT GUARDIAN
PH. 3234 0870 or 1300 653 187
An independent statutory officer appointed to protect the rights and interests of adults with impaired decision-making capacity caused by intellectual or psychiatric disability, dementia, acquired brain injury or a temporary impairment such as delirium or unconsciousness.

PARISH PRIESTS
Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of St George, South Brisbane PH. 3844 3669
• Very Rev. Father Gregory Sakellariou
• Rev. Father Dimitri Tsakas
• Rev. Father Anastasios Bozikis
Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of the Dormition of the Theotokos, Mt. Gravatt. PH. 3343 7304
• Very Rev. Father Constantine Lentakis
• Rev. Father Nicholas Brown
Greek Orthodox Parish of St Paraskevi, Taigum. PH. 3865 1218
• Rev. Father George Papoutsakis
Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of St Anna, Gold Coast. PH. 5574 0777
• Rev. Father Romanos Stergiou

PUBLIC TRUSTEE OF QLD
PH. 3213 9288 or 1300 651 591
Provides services for people who, due to accident, illness, age or disability, require assistance with the administration of their financial and legal affairs. Can assist by acting as an Administrator, Financial Attorney or Trustee.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE & THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL
This website contains information about legal structures that exist in Queensland to support adults who, for various reasons, are unable to make decisions for themselves.

RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITIES
The following residential aged care facilities either work closely with, or have indicated they are interested in working with, the Greek speaking community:
Brisbane
• Bellevue Care Centre, Ferry Hills PH. 3550 5999
• Berlasco Court Caring Centre, Indooroopilly PH. 3371 4377
• St Nicholas Nursing Home and Hostel, Highgate Hill PH. 3844 6063 (nursing home) or 3846 3644 (hostel)
Gold Coast
• Hill View House, Merrimac PH. 5559 3222

TAXI SUBSIDY SCHEME (QUEENSLAND TRANSPORT)
PH. 3253 4954
Queensland-wide scheme to assist people with severe disabilities who have difficulty accessing public transport. Eligible people receive vouchers entitling them to 50% discount on all their taxi fares (max. $25 per trip) while they are current members. Call the Taxi Subsidy Scheme to find out more about your eligibility.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS
5 Steps to Entry into Residential Aged Care
Booklet by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing which provides information to assist people to understand residential aged care and how to access it. The booklet is part of a residential aged care pack, available free by phoning either the Aged and Community Care Line (1800 500 853) or the Commonwealth Carelink Centre (1800 052 222)

DPS Aged Care Guide
Visit www.agedcareguide.com.au
A listing of all residential aged care facilities in Queensland. Available online or in book form.

Visiting with Elders: Strategies to help you have a meaningful and rich visit with an elderly loved one, 2nd edition. Toronto. 2006 (a publication by Baycrest, Canada, available online at www.baycrest.org)
The following sources were consulted in producing this booklet:

- Aged Care Australia website.
  www.agedcareaustralia.gov.au
- Aged Care Information Line
- Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency
- Alzheimer’s Association National Dementia Helpline
- Alzheimer’s Association Qld and their website.
  http://www.alzheimersonline.org/facts/faq.php
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare media release.
  ‘Aging in Place’ in former hostels on the rise after 1997 reforms
- Baycrest. Visiting with Elders:
  Strategies to help you have a meaningful and rich visit with an elderly loved one,
- Carer Qld Resource Centre
- Centrelink
- CoAsIt. How do we care for our parents?
  A guide through the choices for elder care.
- Commonwealth Carelink Centre
- Commonwealth Carer Respite Centre
- Department of Health and Aging website
  www.health.gov.au
- Department of Health and Aging.
  5 Steps to Entry into Residential Aged Care booklet. 2005
- Department of Health and Aging.
  Checklist: Choosing an Aged Care Home
- Department of Justice and the Attorney-General.
- DPS Guide to Aged Care
- GOC Care
- Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia 2007
- Interviews with families of nursing homes residents
- Interviews with service providers
- Mount Olivet Community Services
- Office of the Adult Guardian
- Orthodox Wiki – List of parishes in Queensland
- Princess Alexandra Hospital Aged Care Social Work Team.
  Moving from your home to an aged care facility. 2001
- Princess Alexandra Hospital Aged Care Social Work Team.
  Residential Aged Care Facilities: Nursing Homes – High Care Facilities. 2006
- Public Trustee of Qld.
- Public Trustee of Qld website
- Queensland Transport Taxi Subsidy Scheme
- Regent Taxis
Greek Orthodox Community of St George
36 Browning Street
South Brisbane QLD 4101
PO BOX 3620
South Brisbane QLD 4101
P: (07) 3844 3669
F: (07) 3844 0967
E: info@gocstgeorge.com.au
www.gocstgeorge.com.au