

Residential aged care facility

Identifying and definitional attributes

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Definition: *A special-purpose facility which provides accommodation and other types of support, including assistance with day-to-day living, intensive forms of care, and assistance towards independent living, to frail and aged residents. Facilities are accredited by the Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd to receive funding from the Australian Government through residential aged care subsidies.*

Context: There are several definitions used in the health and community services sectors in relation to residential aged care, and residential aged care facilities. Most of these definitions revolve around the services offered in residential aged care facilities, rather than the facilities themselves.

The Aged Care Act 1997 (Division 41, section 3) defines the meaning of residential aged care but does not define the place in which this care is offered, other than as a 'residential facility'. The Act defines residential aged care as follows:

(1) Residential care is personal care or nursing care, or both personal care and nursing care, that:

(a) is provided to a person in a residential facility in which the person is also provided with accommodation that includes:

(i) appropriate staffing to meet the nursing and personal care needs of the person; and

(ii) meals and cleaning services; and

(iii) furnishings, furniture and equipment for the provision of that care and accommodation; and

(b) meets any other requirements specified in the Residential Care Subsidy Principles.

The Act also defines what is not residential care:

(2) Residential care does not include any of the following:

(a) care provided to a person in the person's private home;

(b) care provided in a hospital or in a psychiatric facility;

(c) care provided in a facility that primarily provides care to people who are not frail and aged;

(d) care that is specified in the Residential Care Subsidy Principles not to be residential care.

Similarly, the National Classifications of Community Services (AIHW) provides no definition of a residential aged care facility, but rather defines residential care and supported accommodation for aged persons in terms of the activities undertaken at such facilities. The activities specified include the provision of accommodation, often on a long-term basis, at a special-purpose facility, in conjunction with other types of support. The nature of the other types of support is such that live-in, rostered or visiting persons assist with necessary day-to-day living tasks (which the intended users cannot do themselves, or can only do with help), provide intensive

forms of care (for example, nursing care) and provide assistance towards independent living (for example, legal assistance, retrieval of personal belongings, advocacy and counselling).

Residential care and supported accommodation for aged persons are also defined in terms of the level of care provided, as assessed through the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI), which assesses care needs as a basis for allocating Australian Government funding.

This NCCS definition also excludes situations in which the primary activity involves the stabilisation and management of people with acute health problems together with the provision of accommodation, such as hospitals, alcohol and drug treatment centres, other health care establishments, psychiatric hospitals and general respite care.

The Department of Health and Ageing refers to residential aged care organisations as being those which are approved under the Aged Care Act 1997 to provide Commonwealth-funded residential aged care services, and specifically excludes flexible care services such as Extended Aged Care at Home and services funded under the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Care program. Once again the definition revolves around services provided.

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency Ltd, the body appointed by the Department of Health and Ageing to manage the residential aged care accreditation process, details the processes by which a provider is accredited in order to receive funding from the Australian Government through residential aged care subsidies. The agency outlines the standards by which providers are accredited and uses the term 'residential aged care homes' in its documentation.