

Ageing Australia National Conference 2025

# Lifting voices: Empowering diverse women in Aged Care



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# Acknowledgement of Country

As we care for those who have left their homelands to build new lives in Australia, we recognise those who have always called these unceded lands and waterways home.

As we strive to create safe passage for new arrivals, we acknowledge the Traditional Owners who have nurtured country, connection, and community here for thousands of years.



# About Spectrum

Spectrum is a not-for-profit organization supporting multicultural communities since 1980, with staff from over 50 cultural backgrounds.

We offer services in 30+ languages, focusing on culturally tailored aged care programs, social support, and wellness initiatives for independence and connection.

Spectrum supports people from migrant and refugee backgrounds with settlement, employment, family, youth, and carer services to help them thrive across all stages of life.



# Our Mission

To provide high quality, culturally safe and responsive services for people from diverse backgrounds.

As a committed partner of our community we advocate, promote inclusion and champion belonging.

# Our Vision

A profoundly inclusive Australia, where diversity enhances the lives of all.

# Our Purpose

For everyone to feel at home





# What we do at Spectrum

- Aged Care
  - In Home Support Brokerage
    - Pool of 100+ Support Workers
  - Home Care Packages
  - Support for Carers
  - CHSP In-home support
  - Social Support Groups
    - HACC PYP
  - Care Finder program
- Settlement, Employment, Migration, Family & Youth





# The facts



79% of the care & support workforce are women.

[Jobs and Skills Australia](#)

40% born overseas (CALD) in the care & support workforce. [Jobs and Skills Australia](#)

In 2024, 41% of aged care workers report speaking a language other than English.



# The challenge

Essential to care, yet undervalued.  
Frontline roles, but limited recognition.  
Leadership pathways often closed.  
Diversity in the workforce, but not in leadership.



# Starting with Safety

Safety is the foundation of leadership.

When people feel safe, they find their voice.  
Psychological and cultural safety builds trust and belonging.  
From that foundation, confidence, growth, and leadership can flourish.



# Starting with Safety

**Safety is the foundation of leadership.**

With the care workforce made up of 40% CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) people, many staff may face cultural or communication barriers.

79% of care & support workers are women — gender may compound other marginalisations.

In home care, many personal care workers work part time or casual, which can affect consistency of supervision & safety practices.

41% of aged care workers speak a language other than English, increasing their risk for experiencing language barriers and cultural unsafety.





# From Survival to Growth

## Frontline Roles

31% of direct care workers are in home care services.

## Building Skills

Ongoing training builds confidence and improves care provided to clients.

## Workforce challenges

High proportion of part-time/casual work in home care, affecting stability and growth trajectories.

## Rising Demand in Home Care

The care & support workforce is growing, with demand increasing as more older people choose to stay at home.



# Mentoring & Peer Support:

## Empowering Women Through Connection and Guidance

At Spectrum, I started my journey as a support worker, where I found a deep sense of purpose in caring for others and learning from their life stories.

I felt drawn to contribute behind the scenes, which led to a new opportunity as a workforce administrator. With the guidance and support of my team leader and colleagues, I was able to grow into this role, transforming not only my career but also my confidence and mindset.

Looking back, I am grateful for my colleagues who believed in me and encouraged me to pursue this opportunity”

Luseane





# Mentoring & Peer Support:

## Empowering Women Through Connection and Guidance

Spectrum & the RISE program has been an empowering journey, helping me build confidence, encourage self-reflection, resilience, and develop strategies to grow personally and professionally.

Sponsorship has been a turning point, that has created the opportunity to learn advanced finance tasks which has expanded my skills and gain exposure to cross-departmental meetings. These experiences have broadened my perspective and opened doors I might not have accessed on my own.

RISE has shown me the power of lifting multicultural women's voices, creating space for us to grow, lead, and inspire others.

Harsha

# Spectrum's impact: Women leading change

Cultural  
Lens

Woman  
Centred

Peer  
Networks

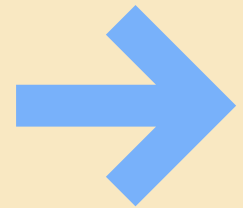
Leadership  
Pathway



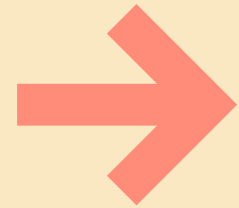
# Leadership Development Pathways



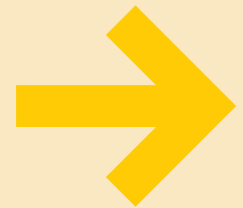
# Spectrum's Impact: Women Leading Change



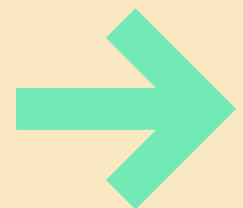
Women rising from frontline care to leadership.



Safety and mentoring unlock confidence.



Leaders shaping services and supporting others.



A cycle of empowerment that strengthens aged care.





**How we nurture leaders**





## Investing in Home Care workers strengthens the sector

Nearly 1 in 3 aged care workers are in home care. Investing in their growth benefits the entire sector. ([gen-agedcaredata.gov.au](https://gen-agedcaredata.gov.au))



## Cultural Safety is Essential in Aged Care

With 40% born overseas and 41% speaking a language other than English, cultural safety is not optional, it's essential.



# Lessons for the Sector

Diversity for better outcomes for all



## Inclusive Leadership

Uplifts staff, strengthens teams, and ultimately improves care outcomes for older people.





# What next?

## When women rise, Aged Care rises

- Create pathways – mentoring, peer networks, and training for CALD women in frontline roles
- Champion visibility – celebrate diverse leaders to inspire the next generation
- Act now – building inclusive leadership is critical as demand for home care continues to rise
- Invest in safety first – psychological and cultural safety are the foundations of leadership





# Our Values

Respect

Belonging

Connection

Excellence





# Stay connected with us!



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spectrum  
feel at home