



# Stronger Leaders, *Better Care*

*Empowering tomorrow's leaders with  
capability, confidence & culture*

Ageing Australia  
QLD CONFERENCE 2026



NOOSA *Care*  
CARRAMAR • KABARA



## Why Leadership Matters in Residential Aged Care

- RNs are central to quality, safety, and resident outcomes
- The Aged Care Act requires strong clinical leadership
- Leadership capability improves workforce retention and engagement
- Families increasingly expect visible and accountable clinical leadership



## The Current Leadership Challenge

- Increasing clinical complexity in residential aged care
- Workforce shortages and high turnover
- Many excellent clinicians have limited formal leadership development
- Burnout and workload pressures reduce confidence to lead
- Need to build the next generation of nurse leaders now



## What Great RN Leadership Looks Like

- Resident-centred and values-driven
- Clinically credible and evidence-based
- Strong communication and conflict resolution skills
- Able to lead multidisciplinary teams
- Focused on continuous improvement and mentoring others
- Empowerment to lead





## Creating a Leadership Pathway

- Develop clear career pathways from graduate RN to executive leadership
- Introduce emerging leader and clinical leadership programs
- Provide acting opportunities and project leadership roles
- Identify high-potential staff early and support progression





## Investing in Education and Development

- Structured leadership training programs
- Support postgraduate study and professional development
- Training in governance, financial literacy and workforce management
- Coaching in emotional intelligence and resilience
- Regular reflective practice and case reviews





## Mentoring and Coaching

- Pair emerging leaders with experienced mentors
- Create peer support networks across sites
- Use executive coaching for senior nursing leaders
- Encourage shadowing opportunities with operational leaders
- Build confidence through feedback and recognition





## Empowering Clinical Decision- Making

- Enable RNs to lead care planning and quality initiatives
- Involve nurse leaders in organisational strategy discussions
- Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy where possible
- Support innovation and local problem-solving
- Ensure leaders have authority aligned with accountability





## Building a Positive Workplace Culture

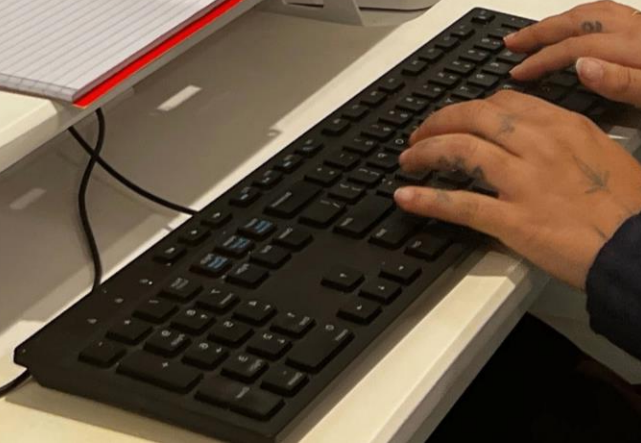
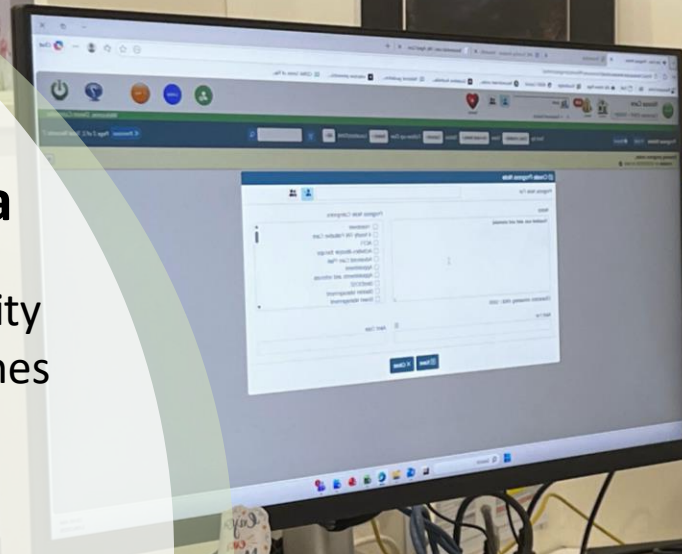
- Leadership culture starts at the top
- Psychological safety encourages staff to speak up
- Recognition and appreciation improve retention
- Inclusive leadership strengthens team engagement
- A learning culture supports continuous improvement





## Supporting Leadership Through Technology and Data

- Use data to drive quality and workforce outcomes
- Provide leaders with meaningful clinical dashboards
- Reduce administrative burden through digital systems
- Use workforce analytics to identify trends and risks
- Enable more time for clinical leadership and resident care



## Partnerships and Sector Collaboration

- Partner with universities and training organisations
- Support student placements and graduate programs
- Participate in sector leadership forums
- Share innovation and lessons across providers
- Advocate collectively for workforce investment



## Measuring Success

- Improved resident outcomes and satisfaction
- Higher RN retention and engagement
- Reduced agency reliance and turnover
- Stronger compliance and quality indicators
- Greater internal promotion into leadership roles





## Key Message for the Sector

- Leadership development is not optional — it is strategic
- Investing in RN leaders improves care, culture and sustainability
- The future of aged care depends on empowered clinical leadership
- Every provider has a role in growing the next generation of leaders





Thank you