



# Bridging the Wait: A Guide for Older Australians on the Home Care Waitlist

By Lumia Care | December 2025 Edition

# Introduction

## The Wait is Real, But So Are Your Options

Right now in Australia, more than 200,000 older people are either waiting to be assessed for aged care or have been approved but remain without support. Some wait up to 11 months for their package to begin—and that's after the 6 to 8 weeks it can take just to be assessed.

But here's the truth: **you don't have to wait helplessly.** There are proactive, effective, and often free or low-cost things you can do to stay safe, connected, and independent while you wait.

This comprehensive, step-by-step guide from Lumia Care combines:

- ✔ Expert advice from aged care professionals
- ✔ Practical scripts and tools to advocate for yourself
- ✔ Actionable tips to maintain your independence



# Part 1

## Understanding the System So You Can Work It

### Where You Might Be on the Waitlist

There are two queues:

- 1 Waiting for assessment**
  - Over 120,000 people still waiting for assessment (as of late 2025)
  - Assessment wait time: 6–8 weeks
- 2 Approved but waiting for services to start**
  - Over 88,000 approved and waiting for care to start
  - Package wait time: 8–11 months depending on priority level

Combined? That's more than 200,000 older Australians in limbo.

### Support at Home Is Here: What That Means for You

In preparation for the new Support at Home system, the Government released 20,000 new aged care packages in late October 2025—ahead of schedule—to reduce delays. This marks the beginning of the rollout. An additional 63,000 packages will be made available by June 2026.

Support at Home has now officially replaced the former Home Care Package system. It introduces eight care categories, providing more tailored and flexible support options that better match individual needs. If you're already approved for care, you'll be transitioned automatically.

- ✓ **Priority on the waitlist matters most:** Those assessed as urgent or with worsening needs are most likely to be allocated first.
- ✓ **Upgrades from lower levels:** People already on a Level 1 or 2 package who have been approved for a higher level are strong candidates for allocation.
- ✓ **CHSP to SAH transitions:** Older Australians receiving entry-level services under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP) and who have been approved for a SAH program may be prioritised to reduce duplication and smooth continuity of care.
- ✓ **Geographic distribution:** Packages are spread across states and regions based on demand and service availability.

In short, if you are already approved and waiting, or if you've been flagged for a priority review, your chances of receiving one of these packages are stronger. Those with lower priority ratings may still need to wait longer.

## Part 2

# Practical Actions You Can Take Right Now

## 1 Request a Priority Review If Your Needs Have Changed

The system does allow you to move up the list if your condition has worsened.

When to request a priority review:

- Recent hospitalisation
- More frequent falls
- Deteriorating memory or mobility
- Increased reliance on family carers

If your situation warrants a priority review, you should ring My Aged Care to request a re-assessment.

You can:

**Ring Lumia Care**

 **1300 796 876**

**Ring My Aged Care**

 **1800 200 422**

# Suggested Call Script for Requesting a Priority Review

## Step 1 – Introduce Yourself

“Hello, my name is [\_\_\_\_\_]. I’m calling to follow up on my home care assessment. I’d like to request a priority review of my current position on the waitlist.”

## Step 2 – Mention Your Previous Assessment

“My most recent assessment took place on [\_\_\_\_\_]. Since that time, my circumstances have changed.”

## Step 3 – Explain What Has Changed

“I have experienced [\_\_\_\_\_].”  
“This has made it much harder for me to manage daily living activities such as [\_\_\_\_\_].”

## Step 4 – Point Out the Risks if Nothing Changes

“Without extra support, I am at increased risk of [\_\_\_\_\_].”

## Step 5 – Ask for an Update

“Because of these changes, I’d like my record updated and my case considered for priority allocation. Could you please let me know what the next steps will be?”

## Step 6 – Confirm the Process

“Can you tell me what information you need from me and how long the priority review process usually takes?”

**Tip:** Have specific examples written down before you call.

**Tip:** Once you’ve made the request with My Aged Care, follow up by calling the assessment team directly (My Aged Care can give you their phone number). Speaking to them in person and explaining the urgency often helps move your case forward more quickly.

## 2 Say Yes to Any Support Offered

While waiting for your ideal classification (e.g. 3 or 4), **accept what's available now:**

- Take a lower classification level and upgrade later
- Access CHSP (Commonwealth Home Support Programme) for basic services
- Use private care on a flexible, pay-as-you-go basis

**Tip:** Staying active in the system keeps you visible.

## 3 Use Free and Low-Cost Local Services

Many councils and community centres offer support that can make a real difference:

- Council-run cleaning or meal prep programs
- Volunteer transport to medical appointments
- Senior social groups to combat isolation
- Local podiatry, OT or physio with bulk billing or senior discounts
- Library home delivery programs

**Tip:** Ask your local council for a “directory of senior services”.

## 4 Make Home Safer Now

Small changes can help you stay independent longer:

- Motion sensor night lights
- Grab rails near the shower and toilet
- Remove tripping hazards (like loose rugs)
- Ask about a home safety check by an OT

**Tip:** Some providers like Lumia can assist with low-cost modifications.

## 5 Keep a Care Journal

Track your health and daily challenges in a notebook. This helps you:

- Provide clear information during reassessments
- Spot patterns like fatigue, memory lapses, or pain
- Show case managers how your needs are evolving

**Tip:** Include notes on falls, missed medication, or skipped meals.

## 6 Plan Ahead

Research providers, fees, and services so you're ready when your package arrives.



# How to Get Help Without a Government Package

## 1 Pay-as-You-Go Private Care

You don't need a government package to access care:

- Lumia offers no-lock-in, flexible services
- Ideal for people waiting for funding
- Can be scaled up or down week to week

Popular private care options include:

- Personal care (showering, grooming)
- Meal prep - Domestic support (cleaning, laundry)
- Transport to appointments

You may only need 2–3 hours per week to stay independent.

## 2 Respite for Carers

If a family member is your main carer, you can access:

- Short-term respite (even overnight)
- [Carer Gateway supports](#)
- Community carer groups for emotional and practical support (e.g. <https://carersvictoria.org.au/carers-support-groups/> in VIC, <https://www.carersnsw.org.au/services-and-support/programs-services/carers-support-groups> in NSW)

Carers can burn out—these breaks help everyone stay well.



### 3 Allied Health and Equipment

Use the waitlist time to access key services like:

- Podiatry
- Physiotherapy for strength/balance
- Dietetics (especially for diabetes, heart issues)
- OT assessments for home modifications
- Equipment: walkers, shower stools, mobility aids

Ask your GP if referrals or EPC plans (Medicare-funded) can help cover these.



# Enhanced Home Safety & Fall Prevention

## Home Safety Checklist

This checklist can be used by older Australians themselves or by family members to walk through the home and identify areas that need attention.

### Entrances & Hallways

DESCRIPTION	CHECK	NOTES
Ensure all hallways and entrances are well lit, ideally with motion-sensor lights.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Remove loose rugs, cords, and clutter from pathways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Install sturdy handrails on both sides of stairs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Make sure doorways are wide enough and free of obstacles for walking aids.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

### Living Areas

DESCRIPTION	CHECK	NOTES
Keep frequently used items within easy reach to avoid climbing or stretching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Arrange furniture to allow clear, wide pathways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use chairs with armrests to assist with standing up safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Secure or remove any unstable or low furniture that could cause trips.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Bathroom & Toilet

DESCRIPTION	CHECK	NOTES
Install grab bars near the toilet, shower, and bath.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Place non-slip mats inside and outside the shower/ bath.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consider a raised toilet seat if standing up is difficult.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure taps and shower controls are easy to reach and turn.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Kitchen

DESCRIPTION	CHECK	NOTES
Store everyday items at waist to shoulder height.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keep a sturdy step stool with handrail if higher shelves must be used.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use non-slip mats on the floor near the sink and stove.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Check that appliances are in good working order and cords are safe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# Bedroom

DESCRIPTION	CHECK	NOTES
Place a nightlight between the bed and bathroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keep a telephone or alarm device within arm's reach of the bed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure the bed is at a comfortable height for getting in and out.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clear the route to the door and bathroom of clutter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# Outdoor Areas

DESCRIPTION	CHECK	NOTES
Check paths, driveways, and steps for cracks or uneven surfaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use outdoor lighting on pathways and entrances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Keep garden hoses and tools stored away to prevent tripping.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Install railings on steps or ramps.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

# General Safety

DESCRIPTION	CHECK	NOTES
Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure emergency numbers are visible and phones are accessible in key rooms.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consider a personal medical alert system for added peace of mind.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Review medication storage: keep medicines organised and labelled to avoid errors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Fall Prevention Tips

- ✔ Arrange a falls risk assessment through your GP or physiotherapist.
- ✔ Use mobility aids correctly and ensure they are in good condition.
- ✔ Choose supportive, closed-toe shoes with non-slip soles.
- ✔ Maintain strength and balance with simple home exercises.

## Emergency Preparedness

- ✔ Keep emergency numbers visible and in phones.
- ✔ Consider a personal alert device.
- ✔ Check smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

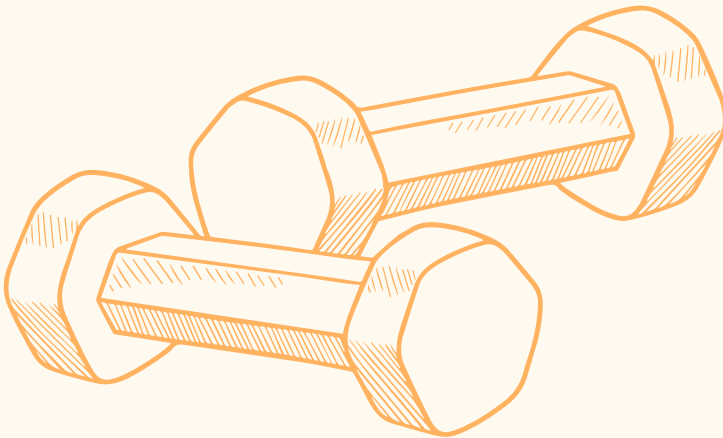
# Health, Wellbeing & Mental Health While Waiting

## Physical Health

- ✓ Stay active with stretching, light exercise, or balance training.
- ✓ Maintain good nutrition and hydration.
- ✓ Review medications regularly with GP or pharmacist.

## Mental Health

- ✓ Stay socially connected through groups or calls.
- ✓ Access telehealth or counselling if feeling anxious or depressed.
- ✓ Keep a daily routine for stability.



# Health, Wellbeing & Mental Health While Waiting

## Weekly Action Checklist

WEEK	ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE
Week 1	Call My Aged Care for status & priority review. Do a home safety check.
Week 2	See GP for allied health referrals. Shortlist providers. Involve family.
Week 3	Accept interim supports. Install safety aids. Start light exercise.
Week 4	Review nutrition, check emergency systems, review mental health.



### When Your Program Starts

- ✔ Review your care priorities and prepare a “wish list.”
- ✔ Choose your provider early to avoid delays.
- ✔ Coordinate existing private or community supports with your SAH.

### Resource Hub

SERVICE	CONTACT INFO
My Aged Care	1800 200 422
Lumia Care	<a href="http://www.lumiacare.com.au">www.lumiacare.com.au</a>
Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission	1800 951 822
Carer Gateway	1800 422 737
Village Local (Advocacy)	<a href="http://www.villagelocal.com.au">www.villagelocal.com.au</a>
CHSP Access	<a href="#">Via My Aged Care</a>

### Take the Next Step

The waiting game doesn't have to mean doing nothing.

- ✔ Print this guide and highlight 3 actions to take this week.
- ✔ Call My Aged Care to check your status and request a review.
- ✔ Contact Lumia Care to explore bridging care or helping with My Aged Care follow ups.



# Why Choose Lumia Care?

## Because real support doesn't wait.

Whether you're waiting to start your aged care package, upgrading from CHSP, or supporting a loved one through the process – Lumia Care is here to help now.

We understand the wait can be long, frustrating, and full of uncertainty. That's why we offer immediate, meaningful support to keep you safe, independent, and in control – without needing to wait for your funding to kick in.

## Support that starts before your package does

You don't have to wait alone. We can help you explore low-cost, private, or interim services that keep you well, active, and supported while you wait.

## Real help while you wait

We can:

- ✓ Guide you to entry-level CHSP services (like meals, transport, cleaning)
- ✓ Arrange a reassessment if your needs have changed
- ✓ Provide respite care for family carers who need a break

## Guidance every step of the way

We'll help you navigate the My Aged Care system, request priority reviews, and understand what to do next – with practical advice that puts you in control.

## 15% off Hourly Rates for new Clients

New clients receive 15% off our standard support worker rates when they nominate Lumia Care as their provider and their aged care package is approved. It means you can get prepared now – and once your package is approved and you're a Lumia client, you'll automatically receive the discounted rate.

## Led by nurses. Backed by experience.

Lumia Care brings over 66 years of trusted care to every household. Our team of skilled, compassionate nurses and carers delivers the highest standard of care – with ongoing oversight included at no extra cost.

## Quality you can trust

We're fully accredited under the aged care package and NDIS programs. Our nurses, support workers, and care coordinators are trained, credentialed, and deeply compassionate.

## Care from people who care

We are proud to deliver nurse-led, relationship-based care that builds trust and continuity – not just checklists. You'll see the same familiar faces and get care that truly fits your life.

**No matter where you are on the journey,  
Lumia Care is here to help.**

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"I didn't have to wait – they started helping right away."  
– Simone (Private Client)

"It feels like someone's finally listening."  
– Peter (CHSP Client transition to SAH)

"More care, less paperwork.  
Just what I needed."  
– Sarah (SAH Client)



# Lumia Care

**“ No one should wait 15 months  
for the care they need today. ”**

*~ Lumia White Paper 2025*

*This guide is brought to you by Lumia Care. We provide  
compassionate, expert, and immediate care for older Australians  
waiting for aged care support.*