

Foundational Leaders Program

Essential skills for operational management success



Training *for* success

Ageing Australia is proud to provide a strong voice and a helping hand as the sector does its best to make a positive difference in the lives of older Australians.

I invite you to elevate your thinking with the Foundational Leaders Program. It offers a true understanding of the speciality of aged care within the healthcare spectrum—to give you quality, sector-specific training.

Today's aged services leaders will play a fundamental role in the transformation of our sector on many levels.

Our leaders should not only understand the business of aged care now, they must also have insight into the aged services sector of the future.

They must be able to draw from innovations in technology and management to create an agile, sustainable, best-practice environment that can support changing consumer demands.

They need to be aware of their own leadership style and how to effectively engage with their colleagues to create a dynamic, effective and caring workforce that attracts and retains talented individuals.

And they need to be able to support older people in a compassionate, in a compassionate, caring and professional manner—to help rebuild trust in our sector.

By equipping our current and emerging leaders with the skills they need to succeed, and enabling upward mobility, we can secure a talented workforce.

At Ageing Australia, we want you to have the right tools to stay engaged, motivated and performing at your peak.

By helping you work better in your role as a leader, the entire aged services sector will benefit.

Ongoing learning for our workforce—especially our leaders—will be essential to realise the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for an aged care system that our elders deserve.



Tom Symondson
Ageing Australia CEO



**Ageing
Australia**

Support for leaders *is* vital

Work-related challenges, lack of career progression, and limited training and upskilling opportunities are key factors that affect staff retention in the aged services sector.

These complications exacerbate workforce shortages and staffing challenges, ultimately adversely impacting older Australians requiring care services.

Numerous studies and reports have been published that point to the shortage of staff and training and career development as reasons for workplace stress and staff attrition.

In 2018, a landmark report, *A Matter of Care: Australia's Aged Care Workforce Strategy* was published.

The report identified:

- gaps in strong and visible leadership that inspires the workforce, fosters talent and helps to make the industry an employer of choice
- challenges in finding leaders with requisite clinical background as well as managerial skills
- organisational leadership has a critical role in promoting new standards of care
- trust and confidence in leadership is the principal driver of workforce engagement and enablement in aged care.



Identified in the *Australian Government's White Paper of Jobs and Opportunities (2023)*, workplaces and role expectations are continuously evolving, leading to people requiring a diverse range of skills to remain current and effective team members. Employers who encourage their workforce to engage in lifelong learning will benefit from staff who are adaptable, flexible, innovative and able to effectively compete with future labour market opportunities. Lifelong learning not only allows workers to remain current and ready for change, it also promotes an alternative to the traditional linear career pathway. It recognises the value of transferrable skills across sectors and the fact that people tend to change careers and roles more frequently than in the past.

In 2023 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimated that the productivity gains from upskilling managers could be three times greater than for upskilling other workers.

An organisation's management and leadership capabilities have significant impact on whether employees determine if a job is the right fit or not. The *Draft National Care and Support Economy Strategy (2023)* noted that it is the role of the leadership team to determine job design, workplace culture and to ensure the safety of workers. Aged care workers reflected their feelings of being unsupported by management who are removed from daily workforce challenges and lack understanding of their concerns. Given the influence leadership has on employee satisfaction across the care and support economy, there is a strong need for improving management capability, resulting in greater productivity and higher quality of care.



Foundational Leaders Program

Foundational Leaders is an ideal introductory program for leaders who are at the beginning of their journey or who may not have previously undertaken self-directed learning or formal leadership training.

Before commencing the program, participants complete the *Care Industry Leadership Capability Assessment (CILCA360)*, which offers a point in time assessment of individual strengths and areas for improvement and provides a baseline measurement.

Participants are welcomed into a nurturing online learning environment where they can share their experiences and common industry challenges, building strong networks that sustain them during and post completion of the program.

Individual coaching is available via a booking system, with access to experienced sector experts, to support participants with current challenges and to guide them on their leadership journey.

Post program coaching is available to Ageing Australia members, through arrangement with Ageing Australia consultancy.

The Foundational Leaders Program has several components:

- **six workshop modules delivered online (via Zoom)**
- **CILCA360**
- **networking opportunities**
- **one-to-one coaching.**



Module descriptions

Module 1 - Leadership and organisational culture

The program commences with a brief review of the group results of the CILCA360 assessment and participants are encouraged to share their individual learning objectives.

Module one focuses on the differing styles of leadership and the important influence that operational managers have on setting organisational culture of their immediate teams and how workplace culture impacts on care quality.

Participants are encouraged to engage in regular reflective practice, applying honest appraisal and examination to aid self-awareness and gain insights to grow in their leadership practice.

The differences between peer support, mentoring and coaching are discussed and how each option creates a growth mindset and learning culture.

Module 2 - Communicating with confidence and empathy for maximum engagement

As a leader, it is important to bring out the best in your team, and it starts with how you communicate. For participants who have never had to lead a team of people, the ability to communicate effectively and have crucial conversations is a vital skill—it can never be underestimated.

Recognising personality traits and what happens when emotional buttons are pressed allows leaders to master their responses, develop empathy and seek feedback leading to greater self-awareness.

It is human nature to avoid difficult conversations; however, not raising concerns effectively can lead to increased levels of frustration within in your team and adversely affect care provision.

Through this module, participants learn strategies and practice how to manage difficult conversations. They also learn to differentiate between when to support staff through use of informal check-ins and when to instigate formal performance management for disciplinary measures and rectify poor performance.

Teaching staff how to give genuine positive feedback to their team members on a regular basis allows them to develop a healthy team and healthy teams deliver better quality care and better outcomes for residents, clients and their families.

Module 3 - Strategic habits and armour of self-care

Employing habits and strategies for time management and dealing with conflicting priorities raises confidence in decision making while supporting self-care.

Learn the art of delegation and why letting go and believing in others builds capacity and trust, resulting in mutual benefits.

Participants learn to manage self-care by evaluating how to deal with stress, triggers for anxiety and other behavioural manifestations in themselves and others.

Through regular purposeful reflective practice and piloting new, managers model the value of a work-life balance to their teams.

Module descriptions

Module 4 - Clinical care provision and reform

More than ever, aged care leaders need to show a strong understanding of organisational management and be able to impart to each staff member their roles and responsibilities within a governance framework, as well as convey these boundaries to their teams and stakeholders.

Clinical governance provides the structure and direction for the delivery of safe and high-quality care, with the needs and preferences of the older person at the heart of service provision.

Participants discuss the implications of current policy reform and are provided access to tools and resources to confidently address the *Aged Care Quality Standards*.

Through exploration of the unique values and preferences of older people receiving care, better care planning and management can be achieved.

An inquisitive stance enables new residents and clients to tell their story and ensures aged care teams can enable wellbeing and provide the best, most relevant opportunities to support ageing well. Quick strategies to improve communication with people with dementia and behaviours of concern are explored.

This module also delivers specific sessions on identifying changes and deterioration in the older person, emphasising the importance of quick and accurate response, including escalation and referral to the appropriate health professional.

Module 5 - Embracing change, future proofing and managing risk

Change brings with it the opportunity for innovation. However, how you communicate that change makes all the difference in how that change is perceived by your team, and how effectively it will be implemented.

Risks are unavoidable in the aged care sector, however, having clear risk management procedures and a culture of safety will enable lower injury costs and negative media attention.

Managing complaints in an efficient manner by applying natural justice principles ensures that your team is supported in a just culture. It also means the care recipient and their families are listened to and that effective remedial action is taken if required.

Module 6 - Business acumen

Business acumen is built on solid business principles and practices as well as having the confidence to apply them in an operational context.

Recruiting and retaining right fit employees, making sound decisions, adapting to changes, and achieving goals, are key skills for leaders and managers.

Participants learn about generational differences and how to maximise these to create a cohesive team.

This module explores the key skills managers require including workforce planning, human resource management, and financial management and reporting.

Participants will understand key terminology relating to management, finance and budgeting, as well as the transparency needed around prudential requirements.

Good managers know how to flex with the changing landscape of workforce shortages, to carefully manage a budget and make solution-focused adjustments to ensure organisational sustainability.

Preparation of reports and papers for senior managers is an effective way to alert management to your concerns and record your efforts to provide solutions. Participants are encouraged to identify a current challenge and write a short briefing paper.

CILCA360

Using CILCA360 as part of the Foundational Leaders program participants will gain a 360-degree view of their strengths and areas for development in their leadership skillset, both before they start and after completing the training program.

CILCA360 is the only leadership assessment tool that is valid, reliable, and industry-specific. Importantly it measures capability across the *Aged Care Quality Standards* and is aligned to the *Australian Aged Care Leadership Capability Framework*.

Administered completely online with self-assessment plus feedback from others, CILCA360 can help identify your current and desired capability across five key leadership domains.

-
- 1. Leading self.** Relationship with, understanding of, and care for self.

 - 2. Leading others.** Ability to relate to, communicate with, and work effectively with others.

 - 3. Leading business.** Management of business resources to achieve organisational goals.

 - 4. Leading purpose.** Ability to articulate and promote the organisation's spirit, purpose and strategic direction.

 - 5. Leading change.** Capacity to foster a working environment that encourages creative and holistic approaches.

These results are shared confidentially with the program facilitator who coaches the participant to identify goals for implementation in their learning journey.

Networking

It is essential that leaders can speak openly to trusted others, about their experiences and common industry challenges, as it reinforces that leaders are not alone.

Networking is at the hub of the Foundational Leaders Program, seeding and fostering an open and inclusive learning environment.

Coaching

One-on-one coaching is offered by industry experts, to support participants with current challenges and to assist their growth on their leadership journey.

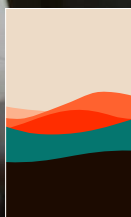


Cheryl Edwards, program facilitator

Our program facilitator for 2025 is registered nurse Cheryl Edwards, who has 36 years' experience in residential aged care management. Cheryl is the head of member support and advisory at Ageing Australia. Cheryl has worked for smaller and larger private and not-for-profit providers, in both corporate and operational roles, as well as in leadership development programs.

She holds qualifications in management, work health and safety, and is a workplace trainer and assessor. Cheryl is also a Myers Briggs practitioner.





Ageing Australia

Please contact Ageing Australia if you would like to know more about us and how we can assist you in the aged services sector. We look forward to hearing from you.

Phone: 1300 222 721

Email: training@ageingaustralia.asn.au

ageingaustralia.asn.au