The holiday check in

New research into what Australian families go through to close the 'Care Gap'

Strengthen family bonds this holiday season by checking in with your loved ones

The holidays are a wonderful opportunity for families to catch up and celebrate the joy of spending time together.

It's also a time when you might notice changes in your older relatives that raise questions about whether they need extra support.

New YouGov research on behalf of Mable shows that 95% of Australians aged 35 and above believe it is important to help older relatives (aged 70 and above) maintain their independence in their homes for as long as possible.

The 'Care Gap': Showing love and concern are the right first steps

The research confirms people's deep sense of commitment to their older relatives, with 79% of Australians saying they care deeply about the wellbeing of their older relatives. This concern is accompanied by a desire to visit more, with 80% of respondents expressing a wish to visit their older relatives more frequently.

Despite juggling work and family, providing assistance to older relatives is a priority, with full-time workers (46%) just ahead of part-time workers (39%) in currently organising or managing support for an older relative.

However, these findings reveal a significant 'care gap'—a common and stressful struggle for families to identify evolving needs and initiate crucial conversations about aged care.

The Care Gap

Only one in three Australians are confident in identifying the care needs of their older relatives. Over 60% of Australians have noticed a decline in an older relative's physical health, cognitive abilities, or overall wellbeing after a period of not seeing them.

The most common declines observed include:

67% a decline in mobility

58% increased need to rest/sit down

44% loss of memory

Other people noticed decreases in:

- **39%** social activities or willingness to leave the house
- **27%** mental wellbeing
- **22%** the cleanliness of their home
- **19%** garden upkeep
- **15%** hygiene standards
- **7%** management of life admin, such as paying bills

Beyond the barriers: Breaking the silence on future care needs

When it comes to discussing future aged care preferences or needs with older relatives, 63% of Australians say they have had this conversation.

Interestingly, millennials (51%) are more likely than baby boomers (41%) to say they are very confident about starting a conversation with an older relative about their future aged care preferences or needs.

While 92% of people believe it's important to proactively plan for potential aged care needs, eight in ten (81%) face barriers to discussing or planning for aged care with older relatives.

Did you know...

More than two in three (68%) people feel hesitant to discuss ageing with older relatives?

The most common barriers to having this crucial conversation are:

Emotional barriers
Older relatives might not
want to admit they may need support (44%).

Physical barriers
Living in a different location or unsure if support
needs are high enough yet to warrant the discussion (32%).

Challenging family dynamics
Not wanting to start a fight or anger the person or
an in-law when you are not the decision-maker (31%).

Financial concerns
How to pay for services (28%).

Information barriers
Not knowing where to start or
difficulty understanding the aged care system (25%).

Approaching these discussions with genuine empathy, warmth, and understanding is the key to achieving a positive outcome.

Supporting your loved one to stay at home

Awareness of self-managed aged care remains low, with just one in three (35%) Australians understanding what is involved, and half being only vaguely familiar with the concept.

Mable empowers people to choose their own support workers, creating a personalised care plan that truly fits their lifestyle, needs, and preferences.

The YouGov research suggests a clear need for greater awareness, resources, and support to empower Australians to proactively plan for and manage the aged care needs of their loved ones, fostering open conversations and ensuring that older Australians can stay at home for as long as possible.

Sign up to Mable today to help your loved one find suitable support to age at home with dignity and respect.

About the research - YouGov conducted this online survey in September 2025, with the findings based on a nationally representative sample of 1,020 Australians aged 35 years and older who have a relative aged 70 years or older who lives independently.

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How to have conversations about care

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