

Australia honours Mersiades' service to aged welfare

Katarina Lloyd Jones January 25, 2026

The aged care expert and former senior government executive tells AAA a lot has changed since he first entered the sector.



Nicolas Mersiades is among the 680 Australians being honoured with an Order of Australia – General Division this year.

Of these, 10 were appointed Companion of the Order, 38 were appointed Officer of the Order, 160 were appointed Member of the Order and 472 were awarded Medal of the Order.

Mr Mersiades has been recognised for his significant service to aged welfare, which includes an extensive list of senior roles within the public service.

From 2012-2021, Mr Mersiades was the Aged Care Financing Authority deputy chair and since 2024 has been a board member for both the Aged Care Advisory Committee and the Independent Health and Aged Care Pricing Authority, and is an independent director of Apollo Aged Care Operations.

He was also a board member of the Aged Care Sector Committee and the Aged Care Quality Agency – now known as the Aged Care Quality and Safety Consultative Forum.

Mr Mersiades also has direct experience within the sector too, having been the director of aged care at Catholic Health Australia for 13 years, from 2009-2022, and was the general manager of strategic policy at Catholic Healthcare from 2006 to 2009.

He told AAA he was “pleasantly surprised, but honoured and at the same time humbled,” by the news.

More choice is biggest change



Nicolas Mersiades

Reflecting on his time working in the aged care sector, Mr Mersiades said a lot has changed.

“The biggest change which is evolving is much greater choice for people,” he said to AAA.

“Both in terms of which provider they can go to receive their services, because the funding now follows the consumer rather than being paid to the provider, so there’s an incentive on providers to make themselves attractive... and also

choice as to whether they receive the aged care services in their own home, if they can, or in an aged care home.

“When we started off it was residential care and that was it, basically. So we’ve seen that extended.”

Mr Mersiades said there has also been significant change in the regulation around the quality of care, with much greater responsibility on providers to be reporting, making the level of accountability much higher than what was seen previously.

“It’s still bedding down, but it’s heading in the right direction,” he added.

“And I think the other important thing that we’ve done is address more carefully how, as a community, we can afford improved quality in aged care services and increased choice.

“We’ve moved to a position where we’re ensuring that aged care is affordable for those with lesser means – but also to make it more affordable for the community, those who can afford to pay will contribute more to the cost of their care, particularly around activities of daily living, as opposed to the direct care aspect... which is more in line with how Medicare operates as well,” he continued.

Mr Mersiades also celebrated the work that has been done to ensure quality services for Indigenous communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

“We’ve got a significant ageing population of people from non-English speaking backgrounds,” he explained to A44.

“Many of them arrived post-war and they’re now entering their 80s and needing access to services which reflect their culture. We’re also doing more about getting services into regional and rural locations.”

Looking to the future Mr Mersiades flagged the ongoing work to be done about the cost of building new accommodation, adding that “no matter how attractive the Support at Home program is, there will still be a need for significant expansion in residential care as well.”

Andrea Coote awarded

Former parliamentarian Andrea Coote is also being honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia – General Division for her significant service to the aged care sector, people and the Parliament of Victoria.

Ms Coote has been chair of the National Aged Care Advisory Council since 2024, and chaired from 2014-2022, with the first four years being when it was known as the Aged Care Quality Advisory Council.

From 2002-2006 Ms Coote was also the Shadow Minister for Ageing and Carers, with the Australian Liberal Party.

Source: <https://www.australianageingagenda.com.au/noticeboard/notice-awards/australia-honours-mersiades-service-to-aged-welfare/>