



RSL CARE SA

CARING FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIANS FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS

FREE GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

First Steps in Aged Care

A calm, practical guide for families beginning the aged care journey — where to start, what the assessment involves, what to ask on a tour, and how to choose with confidence.

If you're reading this under stress, start here.

Most families don't research aged care at leisure. It begins with a fall, a diagnosis, a hospital social worker asking "what's the plan?" — and suddenly you're making one of the most important decisions of a loved one's life, quickly, with no map.

First: you're doing better than you think. The fact that you're reading a guide at all puts you ahead of most families at this stage.

Second: the system is more navigable than it first appears, once you know the sequence. This guide gives you that sequence.

RSL Care SA has provided residential aged care to South Australians for more than a century — at the War Veterans' Home in Myrtle Bank, Morlancourt in Angle Park, and Romani in Murray Bridge. We're a not-for-profit, which means our advice serves families, not shareholders. Much of this guide applies wherever you choose; we've simply written down what we help families through every week.

THE JOURNEY IN ONE LINE

Assessment first, tours second, decision third — and support at every step.

Keep this guide handy. Tick things off. Pass it to a sibling. It's built to be used, not read once.

Start with My Aged Care — everything flows from here.

My Aged Care is the Australian Government's single front door to aged care services. Before any home can offer a permanent place, your loved one needs a government assessment — and it costs nothing to arrange.

1

Make contact

Call **1800 200 422** or visit **myagedcare.gov.au**. Have Medicare details handy. You can call on behalf of a parent or spouse — they'll ask for the person's consent, which can be given on the call.

2

The assessment

An assessor (usually a health professional) meets your loved one — at home or in hospital — to understand their care needs. It's a conversation, not a test. Encourage honesty: families often understate needs out of pride, and that only delays the right support.

3

The approval letter

The outcome letter states what your loved one is approved for — such as residential care or respite care. Keep it safe; every home you speak to will need it. Approval doesn't commit you to anything or start any clock.

What about costs?

Aged care fees are government-regulated and depend on individual financial circumstances. Every home must be transparent about its fees before you commit. For independent information, My Aged Care's fee estimator and a financial adviser experienced in aged care are the right starting points — be cautious of anyone who rushes this conversation.

Permanent care, respite care — and what “good” looks like.

Permanent residential care

A new home with 24-hour care, meals, cleaning and clinical support built in. Modern care is nothing like the institutions many families fear: think private rooms, gardens, activity programs and visitors welcome like family.

Respite care

A short, planned stay — giving carers a genuine break or providing recovery support after hospital. Respite is also the single best way to “try before deciding” on permanent care, for everyone involved.

What separates a good home from an adequate one is rarely the building — it’s whether care is organised around the person or around the task list. At RSL Care SA we’ve built our whole philosophy on this. We call it **the Janus Approach**: care shaped to each resident’s own picture of a good life — their routines, interests, history and preferences — reviewed and adapted as those needs change.

- ✓ Staff know residents' **stories**, not just their charts.
- ✓ Days have rhythm and choice — structure where it helps, freedom where it matters.
- ✓ Families are partners in care, welcome anytime, informed always.
- ✓ Dignity is non-negotiable, at every stage of care.

Three communities, one standard of care.

MYRTLE BANK • ADELAIDE

War Veterans' Home

Our founding home, in Adelaide's leafy south-east — more than a century of continuous care, with retirement living within the same trusted community so couples and friends can stay close.

ANGLE PARK • ADELAIDE

Morlancourt

Warm, person-centred residential care in Adelaide's north-west, named — like all our homes — in honour of service, and run to the same Janus Approach standard.

MURRAY BRIDGE • MURRAYLANDS

Romani

Our newest home: purpose-built, 72 beds, light-filled and modern, on Tumbella Drive adjoining Waterford Estate retirement village — so Murraylands families can choose care without choosing distance, and couples can remain near one another as needs change. Named for the Battle of Romani, where the Light Horse served with distinction.

Permanent and respite care is offered across our homes, subject to availability.

Call **(08) 8379 2600** on Monday to Friday from 9am - 5pm for current availability and to arrange a tour of any home.

Nine questions to ask on any aged care tour.

Tour at least two homes if time allows — comparison sharpens instinct. Ask these anywhere, including with us:

- ☐ How do you get to know a new resident — their history, routines and preferences?
- ☐ What does an ordinary day look like here, hour by hour?
- ☐ How are families kept informed, and how easily can we visit?
- ☐ How do you handle changing care needs, including dementia support?
- ☐ What's today's lunch — and may we see the menu cycle?
- ☐ How long have your senior care staff been here?
- ☐ How do you make the first weeks easier for a new resident?
- ☐ What exactly is included in the fees, and what costs extra?
- ☐ What is the current availability, and how does the waitlist work?

Trust what you notice between the answers

Do staff greet residents by name? Does it smell fresh? Do residents look engaged, or parked? Twenty minutes of honest observation tells you more than any brochure.

Making the decision — together, and kindly.

The hardest part of this journey is rarely logistics. It's guilt. So let's name it: choosing residential care for someone you love is not giving up on them. Done well, it's the opposite — trading your exhausted, round-the-clock worry for professional support, so your time together can go back to being time together.

- 1 Involve your loved one in every choice they can make — which home, which room, what comes with them from home.
- 2 Get siblings aligned early. A single family meeting beats six months of group-chat friction.
- 3 Use respite as a trial where you can — it lowers the stakes for everyone.
- 4 Put the important things in writing: preferences, routines, the life story that helps staff know them.
- 5 Plan the first month of visits before move-in day, so the transition has a rhythm.

And look after the carer, too

If that's you: carer burnout is real, common and nothing to be ashamed of. **Carer Gateway (1800 422 737)** and **Dementia Australia (1800 100 500)** offer free support and counselling for family carers.

When you're ready to talk — about a tour, respite, or just what your options are — call us. No obligation, no pressure. We'll take it at your pace.

(08) 8379 2600

For more than a century,
South Australian families have
trusted us with what matters most.
We've never taken that lightly.



War Veterans' Home · 55 Ferguson Avenue, Myrtle Bank SA 5064

Phone (08) 8379 2600

admissions@rslcaresa.com.au · rslcaresa.com.au

RSL Care SA is a not-for-profit charitable care provider serving the ex-service and wider South Australian community for more than 100 years. This guide is general information only and is not financial, legal or care advice. Please seek independent advice for your circumstances. Information current at publication; details may change.