

7 Essential Questions

to Ask Your Aged Care Provider



A helpful guide for families considering the next step for their loved one.

Provided by:

Berrington

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Introduction

“Will my mum be happy here?”

“Is grandad going to receive the regular medical care he needs?”

“Where do I even start?”

Sound familiar?

At Berrington, we understand the long list of questions, stress and considerations you might have and the worries

churning away in your mind. And while you may have decided on the end goal, navigating the road to aged-care can be a bumpy one.

Australians are living happier, healthier and longer lives than ever before, which makes deciding where to spend their golden years no light decision.

Bottom line? You're not alone.

In this helpful eBook, we invite you to explore seven integral questions to pose when it comes to choosing the right aged care accommodation for your family and loved one.

**You deserve to feel confident and informed,
and we're happy to help you along the way.**



Question 1:

Does the Residential Aged Care Home or Nursing Home feel warm and inviting?



You know how good it feels to drink a hot cup of tea at a friend or family member's home, while enjoying easy, fun conversation. We think that's how a senior should feel in Residential Aged Care Home or their Nursing Home. In addition to offering the highest quality care 24/7, residents should enjoy a positive, uplifting environment where they flourish not languish.

Physical care and mental stimulation should be prioritised. You want your loved one to engage, stay curious and enjoy socialising with their friends and caregivers.

First Impressions Count

Have you ever been in a restaurant where the tables were dirty, or the utensils looked unclean? If yes, it's likely you never returned. An excellent indicator of how well you, Mum or Dad are going to be looked after is how well the gardens, building and living environment are being tended to.

One of the ways a Residential Aged Care Home or Nursing Home can demonstrate their commitment to providing quality care is by featuring a cheerful and spotless setting. After all, your first impression of the property should be a good one.



Things to Look for in an Aged Care Home

- ✓ A sense of homeliness such as lovely, comfortable furniture and warm-coloured walls
- ✓ Space that is well-kept and well-maintained such as beautiful, manicured grounds
- ✓ A bright and welcoming appearance versus one that is gloomy and uninviting
- ✓ A clean, tidy and neat look as opposed to a space that is cluttered or in disarray

Q2 Question 2:

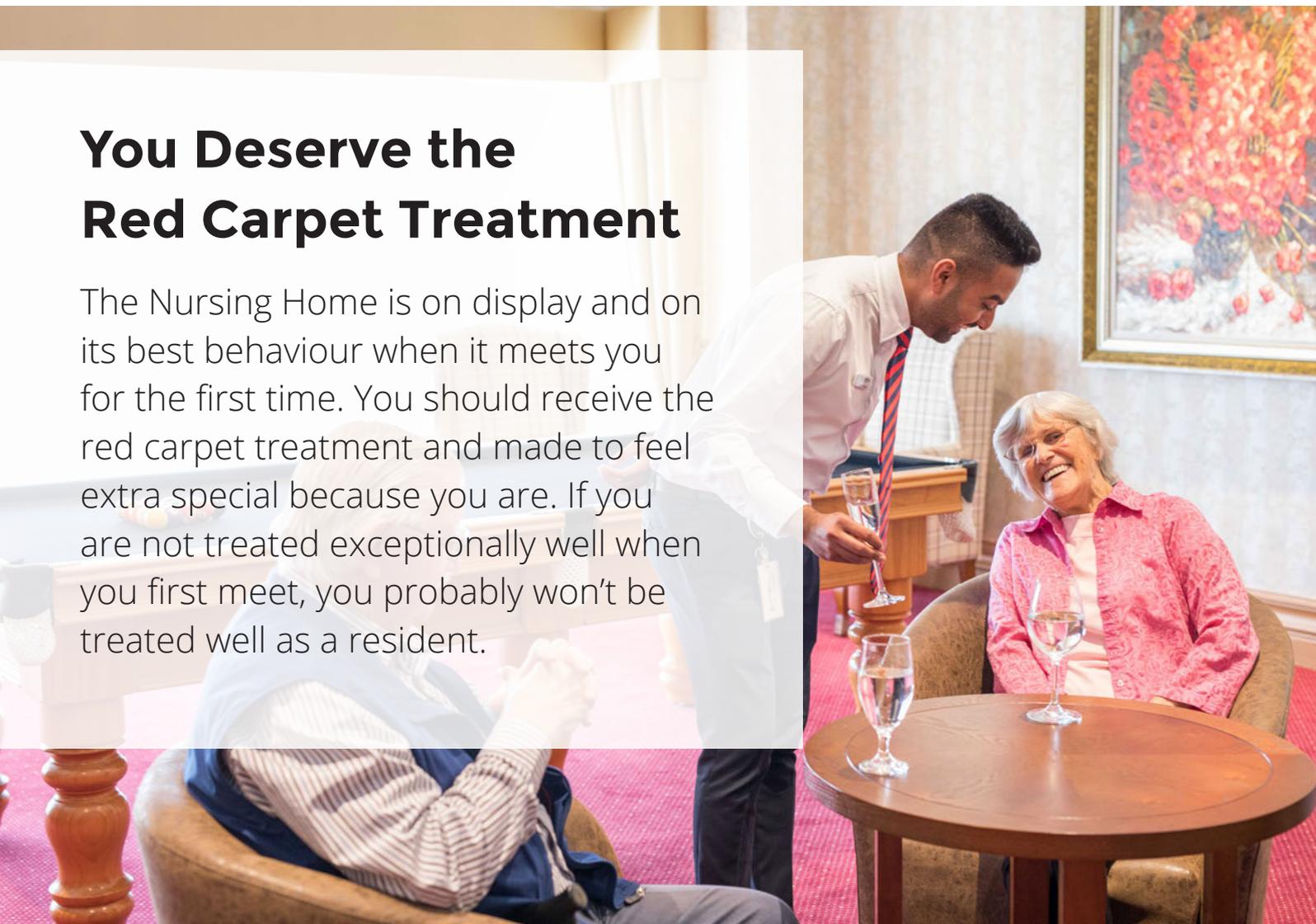
Do you feel welcomed or like a bother when you contact and visit the Residential Aged Care Home or Nursing Home?

You may wonder why this question is important.

The way you are treated when you first make contact, speak with and visit the Nursing Home is an indicator of how you, Mum or Dad are going to be taken care of each and every day you live or visit there. When you call, does the person who answers the phone sound curt or annoyed or friendly and helpful?

You Deserve the Red Carpet Treatment

The Nursing Home is on display and on its best behaviour when it meets you for the first time. You should receive the red carpet treatment and made to feel extra special because you are. If you are not treated exceptionally well when you first meet, you probably won't be treated well as a resident.





A Checklist of Expectations

You Have the Right ...

- ✓ To be given plenty of time to ask any and all questions
- ✓ To be listened to by the Nursing Home staff that you meet and deal with
- ✓ To have your situation, concerns and questions understood by the Nursing Home staff that you talk with
- ✓ To be treated with dignity and respect during your enquiries, consultations and visits with the Nursing Home

Q3 Question 3:

How are the residents treated when you visit?

Why is this question important?

Nursing Homes are bustling places with lots of activity going on at all times. As a Nursing Home can tend to be task-orientated versus resident-focused you want to make sure your loved one doesn't get lost in the shuffle. Each client has high value and a unique personality that should be cherished. You want your loved one to feel part of a warm and nurturing family, not someone who is considered a bother.

While the Nursing Home and its staff are on their best behaviour when they meet you for the first time, you want to determine how they treat their existing clientele — as special, valued guests or with contemptuous familiarity.



Making Observations – During your visits, do you notice the following?



- ✓ The staff to be smiling and friendly
- ✓ That the staff acknowledge and greet you and others while touring the Nursing Home
- ✓ The staff addressing the residents by name and in an appropriately familiar and friendly manner
- ✓ That the residents appear happy and content
- ✓ Laughter and light-heartedness or an atmosphere of sombreness
- ✓ That the staff treat residents with respect and dignity

Q4 Question 4:

Is the Nursing Home adequately staffed to provide all the care and services required?

Whether you're considering care for your Mum or Dad or yourself, you want to have confidence knowing that your healthcare and safety needs will be met at all times. Although a Nursing Home may have the best most well-meaning staff in the world, that won't mean much if there's inadequate supervision or leadership or insufficient competence being displayed. A Nursing Home's staff should inspire confidence not arouse concern.



To ensure good outcomes for you, Mum or Dad, the staff, systems, processes, leadership and supervision all must be of the highest calibre.



Care Checklist

When considering a Nursing Home, you will want to get answers to the following:

- ① Is there Registered Nurse coverage on-site (not on-call and not off-site) 24 hours a day, seven days a week at the Nursing Home?
- ② Is there adequate leadership and supervision 24 hours a day, seven days a week at the Nursing Home?
- ③ Do the Registered Nurses on duty have a dual role at the Nursing Home in that are they also the managers or shift supervisors on duty? If so, when does this occur?
- ④ What was the staff turnover rate in the last twelve months at the Nursing Home? Is this acceptable and why?

Q5 Question 5:

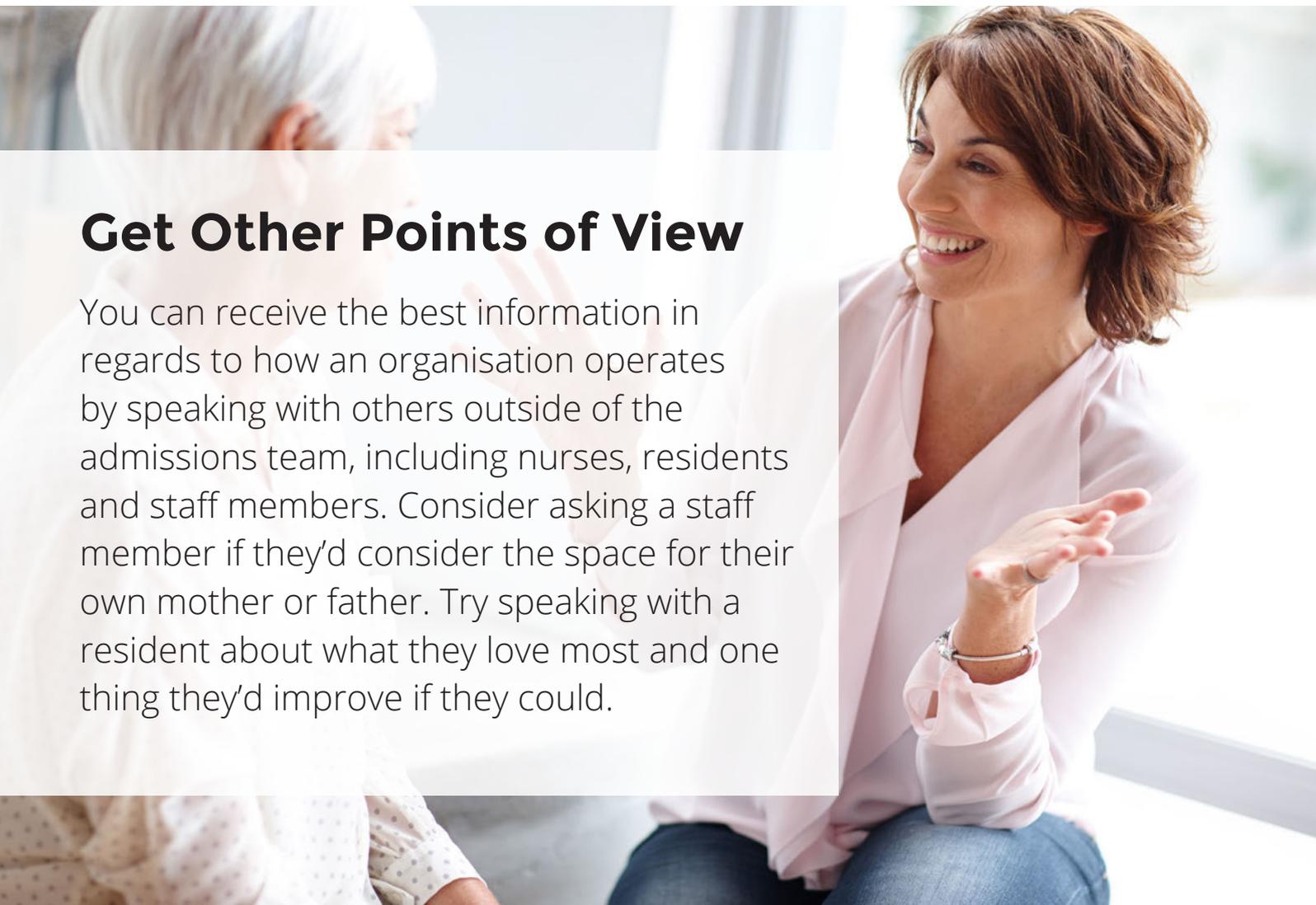
How do others feel about it?

Making a point to discover how others feel about the care setting you're considering can help you understand how they operate behind closed doors.

When speaking with a staff member, they should always treat you and your loved one with empathy, care and consideration. However, expert and peer review matter. As you're just beginning your search, you're going to be presented with "the best" a Nursing Home has to offer in a short period of time.

Get Other Points of View

You can receive the best information in regards to how an organisation operates by speaking with others outside of the admissions team, including nurses, residents and staff members. Consider asking a staff member if they'd consider the space for their own mother or father. Try speaking with a resident about what they love most and one thing they'd improve if they could.



The more perspectives you're able to hear will give you the best well-rounded view of what living there will actually be like for your loved one.

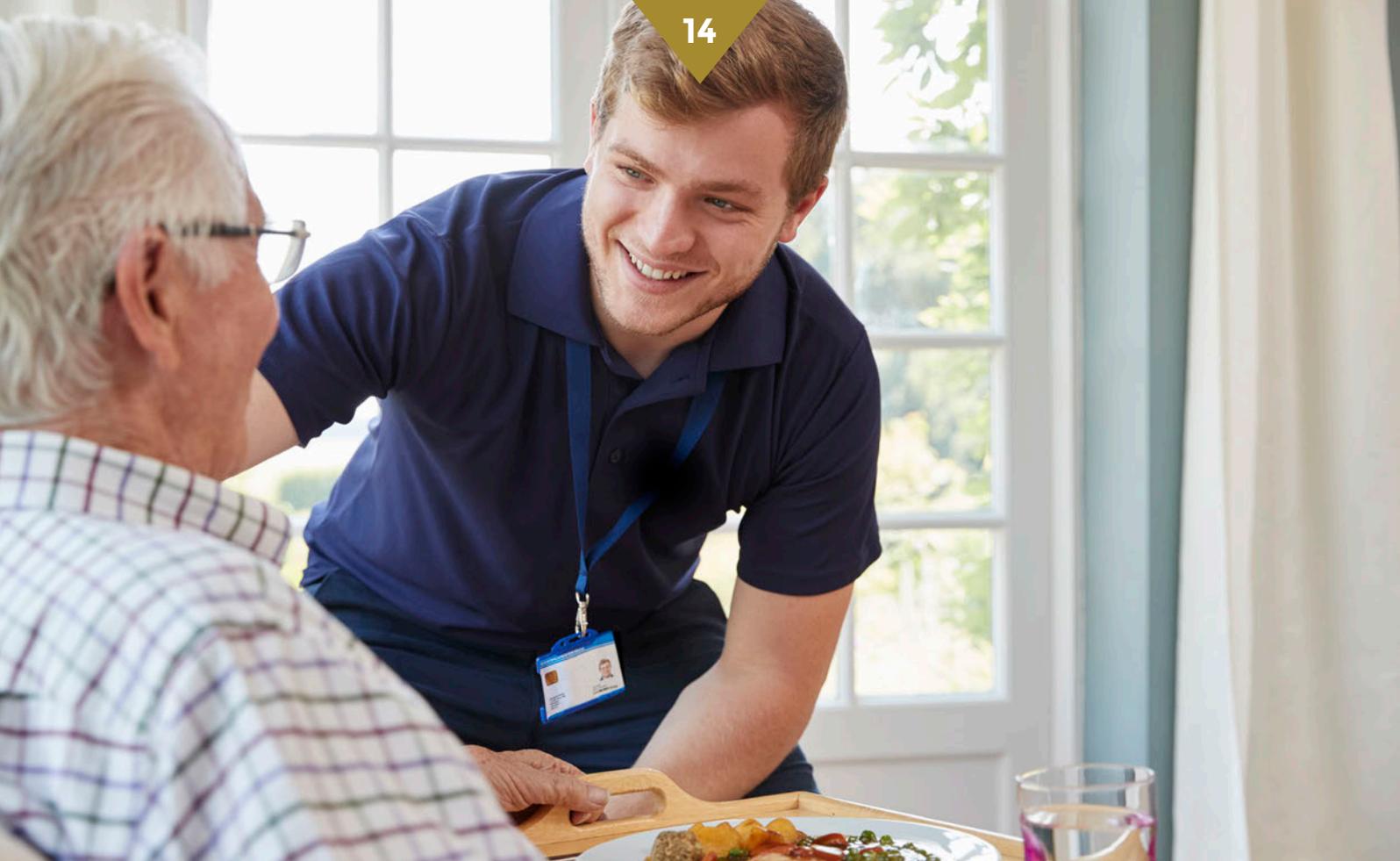


Australian Government

Australian Aged Care Quality Agency

Did you know?

You can visit the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency online (AACQA.gov.au) to read a trusted report on the setting you're considering. Find other reviews and first-hand accounts by posing a simple Google search.



Q6 Question 6:

What's included, what's excluded and what's extra?

When it comes to selecting the appropriate choice for your loved one, considering the financials is extremely important. More so, ensure you know exactly what's included and what's not, or what comes at an added cost.

While everyone's perception of value and quality is different, it's generally true to say that you get what you pay for. **Transparency is key**, and in your search, you should never be made to feel like you're inquiring too much about pricing. The accommodation you select will more than likely be your loved one's last home, and we know what a big step this is for your family.

Consider requesting the following:

- ✓ A breakdown of upfront and ongoing costs as well as a list of what's included in the price
- ✓ A list of "extra amenities" that are offered at additional cost
- ✓ A clear breakdown of services not offered

Your Must-Haves

What are the top five things you're looking for in an aged care setting? Write them down here and be sure to inquire at each new campus you visit.

1

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2

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Q7 Question 7:

Do their philosophies, vision, mission and values line up with your own?



When it comes to settling on your loved one's home, there is nothing more important than ensuring they're happy, well cared for and living the life they deserve.

If the Organisation's philosophies, vision, mission and values are very different than your ideals, you may never be speaking the same language, leaving too much room for stress, tension, and miscommunication of needs, wants or desires.

Begin your search by making sure you're on the same page.

Present Your Needs

Figure out if you and the organisation in question are a match by being open and honest about your loved ones needs and desires. Pay attention to each and every communication and interaction you have with the admissions staff and employees—were they able to address your questions and concerns easily and without hesitation?

If you're feeling confident, invite a loved one or friend to tour the space with you to get a fresh perspective and input.



Walk in Their Shoes

Have staff take you through a typical day in the life of a resident to get a better understanding of how their visions and values are translated into actual services.

Comparison Checklist

It's easy to lose track when you're dealing with a big life transition such as this. If you're touring a number of settings, consider taking this helpful scorecard along with you or fill it out afterwards with your loved one to better visualise the big picture.

EVALUATION OF NURSING HOME NAMED:	SCORE OUT OF 5
▶ Was the furniture presentation quality?	
▶ Are the grounds well maintained?	
▶ Are the amenities and furniture appropriate for the frailty of the clientele?	
▶ Is the space clean and tidy? (Multiple visits can assist you in deciding)	
▶ Are the floor coverings are quality?	
▶ Were the fixtures and features of the rooms' quality?	
▶ What lighting is used, and is there enough natural light in the day (bright and cheerful)?	
▶ Are there enough security measures in place to present safety?	

▶ The environment is not sterile and hospital like?	
▶ Was the smell pleasant?	
▶ Was music being played?	
▶ Was the staff smiling?	
▶ Were you greeted by staff members in passing?	
▶ Did the residents seem happy and content?	
▶ Did your tour guide know residents by name or interact with them?	
▶ Were the corridors wide enough to provide ample access?	
▶ Were hallways easy for a fragile aged person to negotiate?	
▶ Was there a build-up of rubbish anywhere on the property or site?	
▶ Do residents in all areas of the Nursing Home have access to nice, appropriately sized external spaces and gardens with outdoor undercover areas?	
▶ Does the Nursing Home have an appropriate amount of common living areas, lounges and sitting areas that are large enough and private enough for residents and their visitors to use and enjoy?	
▶ Is there an onsite café or kiosk where food and drinks are available for residents and visitors?	

▶ Were there additional services onsite such as a hairdressing salon and beautician?	
▶ Does the home employ a physiotherapist and provide a rehab or gym area onsite?	
▶ Is there a dining area for community and private dining area for functions?	
▶ Is there a special palliative care program?	
▶ Did staffing ratios seem appropriate?	
▶ Are there private areas for private conversations when family comes to visit?	
▶ Did you feel happy and satisfied with your visit?	
Total Score for the 29 questions out of 145:	



Other Considerations

Before you sign on the dotted line, it's critical to have all of your i's dotted and t's crossed. To help you be sure you're covering all of the bases, here are a few considerations:

- ✓ Compare more than one Aged Care Organisation or Nursing Home—even if you feel the very first you visited was incredible, it's a good idea to take a look at other options to be certain.
- ✓ Understand the costs. Have the centres you're interested in provide you with a documented printout of all associated costs both upfront and ongoing.
- ✓ Get independent expert financial advice from a certified financial planner experienced in residential aged care.
- ✓ Seek independent expert legal advice on your contract before signing.
- ✓ Read the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency reports on the Aged Care Organisation you are considering www.aacqa.gov.au
- ✓ Visit as many times as it takes for you to feel comfortable with your choice.



Bonus Tip:

When visiting a potential home, be aware of what sounds you hear—are staff calling residents by name? Is silence the norm? Opening your ears, as well as your eyes, can offer you an inside look you may have missed before.

Conclusion

*“To care for those who once cared for us
is one of the highest honours.”*

At Berrington, we've never heard truer words. Your loved one is our passion, and providing them with a luxurious, quality setting to live out their golden years is the honour of a lifetime. After all, they deserve it.

If you're considering aged care for yourself, a friend or family member, we'd love to help you on your journey.



Contact our team – Fran, Todd or Ken - at your convenience to schedule a no-obligation, complementary tour of Berrington.

**Call 1800 237 746 for more information or
visit www.berrington.com.au**



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