



# Four Industry Challenges (and their Solutions!) You'll Need to Know Post-Aged Care Royal Commission

How Aged Care Providers Can Focus on  
Improving Experiences Today!



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Post-Royal Commission, the Aged Care industry is going through massive expectation shifts from clients, employees and the government. With more intense scrutiny than ever before, experience improvement programs have moved from a 'nice to have' to a **must-have**.

In fact, the Royal Commission report identified four clear themes as to what Australians expect from the aged care industry. These are:

<b>1</b> <b>Dignity &amp; Respect</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Control &amp; Choice</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Relationships &amp; Connections to Communities</b>	<b>4</b> <b>Desire for a Good Quality of Life &amp; Ageing at Home</b>
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Each of these themes presents a vital opportunity for aged care clients and residents to have their voice heard. But it doesn't stop there—customer experience (CX) leaders have an opportunity to take this feedback and make a battle plan, ultimately leading to a better quality of life for the clients and residents they serve.

### What is an Experience Improvement Program?

An Experience Improvement (XI) program is simply a continuous program of work designed to improve the experience of customers and employees—generating business benefits such as retention, new customer referrals, and overall profitability.

They use insights gathered from customer and employee feedback, operational and behavioural data from multiple sources, mined by sophisticated analytics technologies, and then channeled to guide actions in every corner of their businesses.

Objectives might vary infinitely from brand to brand and industry to industry, but it's safe to say that all organisations initiate experience programs with the goal of being better for customers, employees, and their own marketplace standing.

This paper was written by experts, for experts, with the goal of helping CX leaders in aged care navigate their new world. We've teamed up with Brett Thear and John Shearer, CX Leaders at UnitingCare Queensland, and our in-house Senior CX Consultant, Kiri Burgess, to outline the main challenges professionals will face -and some tactical solutions-for improving experiences for clients, residents and employees.

### About The Authors



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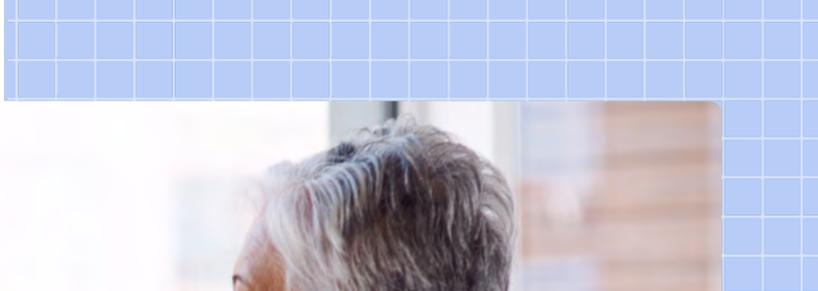


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### So, what happened?

Even before the pandemic and Royal Commission, the aged care industry was already seeing changes left, right and center.

#### To name a few:

- Australia’s ageing population continues to drive increasing demand, with more than 1.5 million Australians projected to be over 85 by 2058.
- The government introduced reforms like “Consumer Directed Care” focusing on improving choice and flexibility for consumers, and a shift away from residential care towards community care.
- Australians, including elderly populations, are getting more comfortable using technology. This change means that Australians are better informed and more empowered consumers with higher expectations.
- The aged care industry as a whole became a lot more competitive. The Royal Commission report shows around 3,000 aged care providers in 2018-19.

Then, the pandemic hit. Aged care facilities across the globe, and here in Australia and New Zealand, were hit with COVID-19. Unfortunately elderly clients and residents—and their carers—were among the populations most at risk. Recently, the Royal Commission has peeled back the onion on what could be improved in the industry, and has recommended the introduction of a new Act to set the foundation of a new aged care system, one that is aimed at achieving seven essential outcomes:

- **Person-First:** Care and supports which address physical, social, psychological, cultural and spiritual needs, supporting people to function independently for as long as possible
- **Simplicity:** One aged care program, one set of eligibility criteria and one assessment process
- **Accessibility:** Information that is easy to locate and understand with face-to-face supports
- **Universal entitlement:** Once entitled to care, guaranteed access to the care and supports assessed as needed

- **Timeliness:** Assessments and reassessments of need occur when required and services commence within one month of assessment
- **Choice of settings:** In the home, community and residential care
- **Inclusiveness:** Recognition of a person’s diverse characteristics and delivery of culturally safe and trauma-informed care

It goes without saying that the introduction of such an Act would have a massive impact on aged care across the country.

Now that we know the new Act recommendations, we’ve put together the top consumer experience challenges—and their solutions—for aged care CX leaders to consider as they navigate this changing landscape.

# Challenge #1

## To Say the Least, Resident and Client Journeys Through Aged Care are Incredibly Complex

The Royal Commission has shown that the client and resident journey is anything but simple. In fact, it requires all clients, residents and their informal carers to navigate My Aged Care and make sense of pretty complex information.

**According to the Royal Commission Report, only 14% of aged care residential and home care providers were registered for My Health Record.**

This statistic shows that the resources available are tricky to understand. Clients are expected to make an informed choice out of ~3000 aged care providers and are left with little support to make sensitive life decisions. Because there are so few resources available, the client or resident typically relies on a family member (often managing the complexities of their own life) to help with this incredibly sensitive transition.

The Royal Commission Report has recognised regulatory, generational, and technological change, all pointing to more end-to-end support for clients and residents.

Here are a few things CX leaders should take into consideration when redesigning support structures:

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### There is a Generational Shift

**Happening:** The current residents in aged care are commonly known as the 'grateful generation'. Their experience living through the Great Depression and World War II has left many of these residents with lowered expectations, and a sense of 'gratitude' for the care and support they receive. But, as the 'Baby Boomers' and 'Gen-X'ers' move into aged care, the expectations are likely to be different, and usually, they will be higher. This newer and younger generation are not afraid to voice their disappointment and are more likely to switch providers if their expectations are not met.

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### More Technology Means More

**Transparency:** The 'Grateful Generation' are not typically comfortable using technology to have their say, but we know this is changing. The next generation of clients and residents, of course, are much more familiar with technology and are taking advantage of the information available to them across all sources when choosing providers.

***Only those providers who are ready and willing to adapt to changing circumstances will survive and thrive in this new chapter.***

## SOLUTION:

### Understand the End-To-End Journey From All Critical Viewpoints

You need to see your business through the eyes of those who are interacting with your brand. Without understanding what a client or residents' end-to-end journey looks like, providers can run into three big problems: falling short of their current clients' expectations and needs, an increase in employee churn, and difficulty attracting new clients.

In the case of aged care, clients, residents and their families are interacting with your products, services and brand experience. The best way to see the world from their point of view is through understanding each of their journeys.

## UP FIRST:

### Client and Resident Journey Maps

In aged care, the journey should first be understood from a client or resident's point of view. It's important to consider

ALL the key moments a client/resident/primary decision maker goes through as they navigate the aged care system, not just the interactions with your organisation. This includes understanding the initial triggers for requiring aged care, how your clients/residents access and consume information, their engagement with My Aged Care, the assessment process, meeting staff for the first time, navigating a new home for residents, establishing trusting relationships and new routines and ongoing interactions with staff. Understanding the journey, what is important at each step, and how to meet the clients' and residents' mental, emotional and social needs at each step is critical in delivering a consistently positive experience.

## NEXT UP:

### Consider the Point of View of Informal Carers

Clients and residents are one moving part in a bigger ecosystem. It's just as important to understand the journey of the main carer or decision maker, often a family member, who is responsible for the client or resident.

It is estimated that in Australia in 2020, there were almost 2.8 million informal carers, made up of around 906,000 primary carers, and 1.9 million non-primary carers, many of whom are the primary decision maker around the care their loved one receives.

These informal carers have an enormous influence over the care and well being of aged care clients and residents, and have their own set of unique challenges. They may live close by, may be interstate or overseas, they may have a family of their own to take care of, be full time employed or retired, or may require care of their own.

Carers can have an immense sense of guilt, stress and worry when making critical decisions about aged care for their loved ones, particularly residential aged care. By understanding the role these carers play, and the needs they have, aged care providers can better design products and services around the family unit. This means a much more pleasant transition to aged care, and much better ongoing support for everyone.



## Challenge #2

### Aged Care Is One of the Trickiest Industries To Collect Open, Honest, and Constructive Feedback

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**Clients and residents typically prefer providing feedback face-to-face to a person they trust, rather than formally through an interview or survey.**

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Usually, the easiest way to find out what's working and what's not, is to ask the question. But, simply asking the question doesn't always guarantee getting the full picture. The current generation of clients and residents don't want to come across as ungrateful, and the relationship formed between these people and the staff providing care is often so strong that they would prefer to avoid giving feedback rather than to potentially "get someone in trouble" by voicing their thoughts. This is only one feedback consideration, but there are many others to keep in mind before engaging clients and residents for feedback:

**Cognitive Ability:** Just over half of people in permanent residential aged care have dementia, and nearly two-thirds (64%)<sup>1</sup> have an ACFI high-care need rating in the cognition and behaviour assessment area.

**Touch and Haptic Perception:** As we age, the brain's ability to understand information coming from the skin (such as your fingertips) and our ability to manipulate objects with our hands can become impaired, limiting our ability to write, type on a mobile phone/tablet, or even hold a pen.

**Limited Use of Digital Technology:**

Clients and residents may not be comfortable, or be able to use digital channels, like a mobile phone or tablet, as a way to provide feedback. Or if they do, they may need help from staff or loved ones which may influence results.

**Informal Versus Formal Feedback:**

Clients and residents typically prefer providing feedback face-to-face to a person they trust, rather than formally through an interview or survey. This might be a family member, and may not be the person providing their care.

**Social Dynamics When Collecting**

**Feedback:** It's important to remember that residential aged care is a social

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<sup>1</sup>Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2020. GEN fact sheet 2018-19: People's care needs in aged care. Canberra: AIHW

setting with unique social dynamics. If you gather feedback in a group setting, the responses will certainly be affected by groupthink or inhibited by social anxiety. It's common industry practice to collect feedback through resident meetings or focus groups. But, there might be a better way. While younger generations might be more comfortable speaking out in a group, you are likely to get more open and honest feedback in a one-on-one setting.

#### **SOLUTION:**

## **It's Time To Get Creative With Feedback Collection**

CX leaders must think outside the box when it comes to collecting feedback in the aged care sector. Given the diverse group of clients, residents, decision makers and wider family members, static surveys are just not enough.

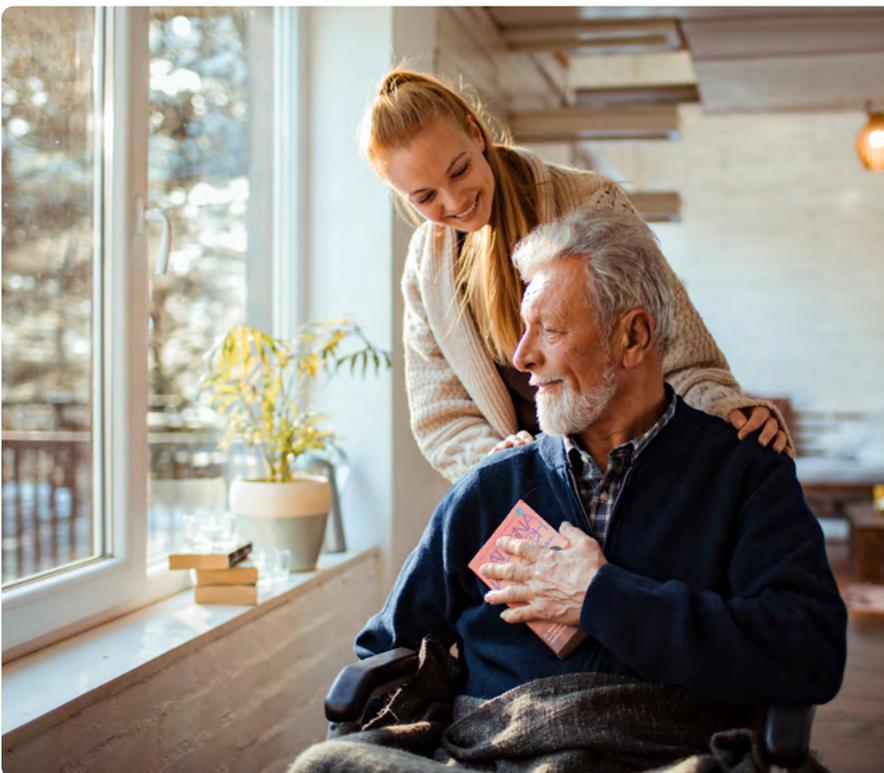
### **A Multimodal Approach is the Way**

**Forward:** This means collecting feedback that accommodates everyone, whether they are receiving care, helping someone receive care, people with dementia, or people with disability. Within the aged care population, you may have people with visual impairments, hearing impairments, cognitive impairments and decreased hand dexterity. Being able to provide feedback through various audio and written modes is absolutely critical, as is enabling feedback to be provided via a trusted source if the client or resident is unable to do this themselves. Multimodal feedback options make sure everyone has an equal voice.

**Change Up the Language:** The communications and language used around providing feedback is something that needs to be considered. The 'Grateful Generation' can view feedback as a complaint, which can hold them back from voicing their thoughts. Using the right language, ensuring there are ways to provide anonymous feedback (or via a trusted source if they require help), and showing that action occurs from feedback are all important steps to encourage residents to voice their concerns.

### **Capture Feedback Constantly Throughout All the Moments That**

**Matter:** Of course there will be critical journey points where you'll want to survey clients and residents about the care provided, but don't forget other opportunities across the journey. These might include the initial enquiry, site tours or initial meetings, the application process, moving in for residents, quality of food





and care, and during social activities and outings if these are possible. This needs to be balanced with an always-on feedback approach that enables clients, residents and informal carers to provide feedback at any time, particularly if they feel anything about their current care is not up to standard.

**Text Analytics to the Rescue!** Collecting feedback is important, of course, but it can be overwhelming to try and read, let alone make sense of all of the comments and rich stories. Text analytics is the solution. This function enables verbatim comments to be grouped into categories, making it quick and easy to see what the main themes are and access the comments related to each theme. Using text analytics, CX leaders can easily highlight not only what needs to be improved, but also understand and share what is going well.

**Involve Informal Carers, Family Members, and Loved Ones:** These are very important stakeholders for clients and residents, not to mention a vital source of information. Each has a different level of involvement with the care provided, so it's important to keep this

in mind when analysing results. Decision makers and wider family members are usually comfortable with digital feedback collection—we saw this in action during COVID-19 when families adapted to SMS check-ins and pulse check-ins during lock-down.

**A LOT of Feedback Is Needed, but a Balancing Act Is Just As Important:**

Clients and residents are not only asked for internal feedback, but sometimes external stakeholders such as the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission are contacting them as well. It's important to balance these two priorities as feedback needs to be captured frequently enough to allow the organisation to pick up on any issues, but not so often that the resident and clients feel fatigued.

**Let Employees Lead the Way:** Frontline employees have a golden opportunity to have quality conversations, as they are communicating early and often with clients and residents. This will likely require training up front, but will ultimately empower frontline staff members to proactively inform other parts of the business when problems or opportunities surface.

# Challenge #3

## Actioning Feedback Is Tricky

CX leaders in aged care face a challenge that will sound familiar across all industries: too much data, too little intelligence, and no idea where to start. When feedback is collected from clients and employees, it's challenging to actually put these into action and see real change. Do these sound like familiar problems?

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“We know CX is a problem area, but we don't have the time or resources to fix it.”

“Business leaders don't even know that customer feedback exists—let alone how to access it.”

“The organisation has a hard time looking beyond metrics, into the actual drivers of the metrics.”

“That's not what our residents/clients told us—they said everything was fine.”

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### **SOLUTION:**

## Build Awareness, Automation and Advocates

Building program awareness across the organisation is the best start to make sure it's successful, and the Aged Care Royal Commission Report is an incredible catalyst. Promote your feedback program across all business units —from the boardroom through to frontline employees.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

#### **Automate and Reduce Any Heavy Lifting:**

CX leaders have started automatically escalating concerning feedback in real time. Long gone are the days of manually reviewing comments, results and having to push those to colleagues one-by-one. A CX platform should automatically alert staff to cases of interest based on positive or negative feedback aligned to defined topics or scores. Ensure frontline workers have access to feedback and results quickly and easily and also provide senior leaders and executives with a clear, easy-to-access overview of the client and resident experience.

#### **Leverage and Build Your Internal**

**Advocates For the Program:** Identify your advocating senior leaders and harness their support through regular check-ins and action plans. Ensure you provide your senior leaders with whatever they need to confidently talk about the program, share the feedback, what it means for

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**Individual emotional stories shared (both positive and negative) are extremely powerful empathy building opportunities that can generate incredible change and action movement within an organisation.**

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the business, and the changes that are coming about as a result of great client experiences.

#### **Use Storytelling As A Compelling**

**Change Agent:** Aged care is an incredibly emotional category. Sometimes a person's routine and way of living is radically changed forever, overnight. Individual emotional stories shared, both positive and negative, are extremely powerful, attention grabbing, empathy-building opportunities that can generate incredible change and action momentum within an organisation. Just think of some of the emotional stories you heard about aged care residents not being able to see their families during COVID-19 and the innovative ideas, new ways of working and communicating that have been quickly implemented as a result.

#### **Align Your Program To What Matters**

**Internally:** To really ignite your program and ensure it gets the traction it deserves, align your listening posts to the key business outcomes that matter to your organisation. Speak to the internal metrics and outcomes that matter and demonstrate how the program can drive not just better client, resident and informal carer outcomes, but also more positive outcomes for the business.

**Just Get Started!** This might seem like a daunting list, but the important bit is to just get started. The sooner you start listening to clients and residents and acting on what you hear, the better!

# Challenge #4

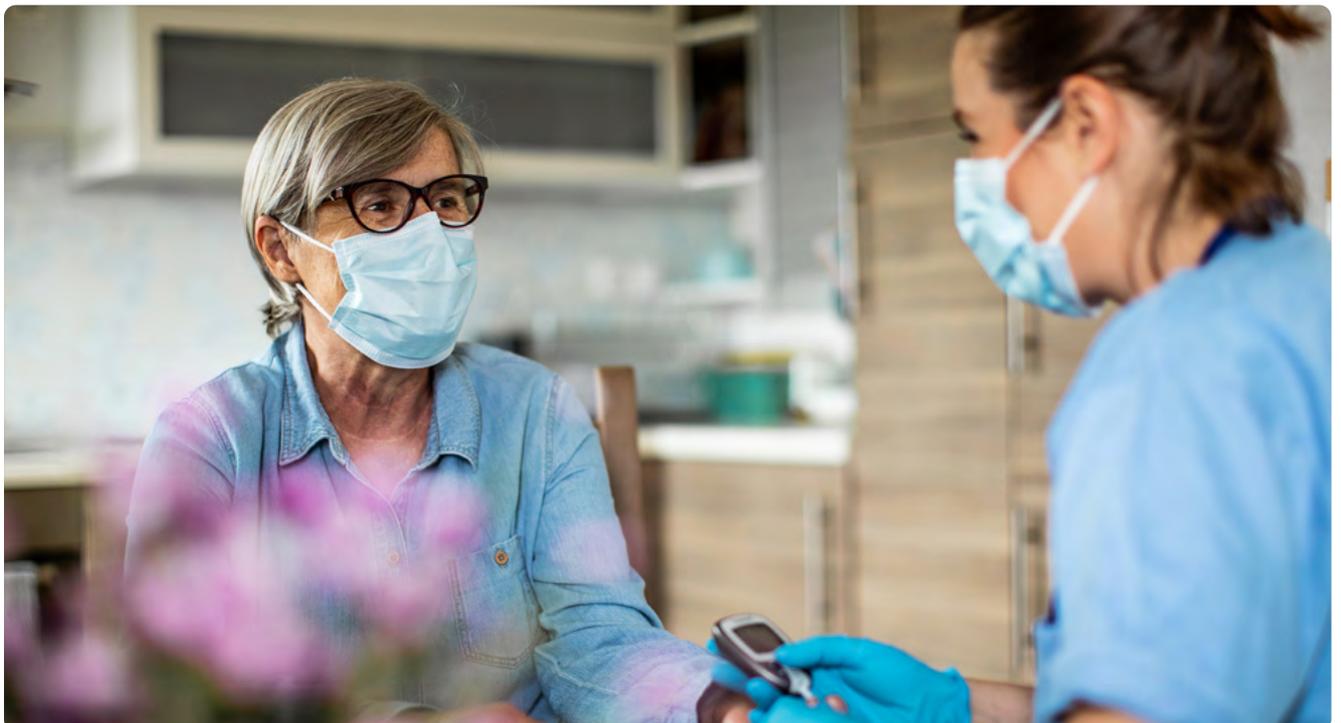
## Happier Staff = Happier Clients and Residents

The Australian Productivity Commission (2011) projects that there will be a need for an additional 105,000 residential care beds by 2026. Combine this stat with industry staff turnover rates of nearly 25%, and a shrinking pool of adequately trained workers entering the field, and what you can see is the aged care industry is facing a potential workforce crisis.

Many join the industry because of the altruistic nature of the work. They find it rewarding to be able to make a positive difference in the lives of those they care for. Understanding how these intrinsic rewards contribute to overall job satisfaction is incredibly important

for aged care providers as research has shown not only a strong correlation between employee job satisfaction and the care their staff provide, but also a loss of job satisfaction is one of the key drivers of staff leaving not only the organisation, but the industry.

To make things a little more challenging, job satisfaction can also be influenced by a number of extrinsic factors such as workload pressures, staffing levels, organisational culture, working relationships, professional development, internal systems and processes, remuneration, and so much more.



## SOLUTION:

# Keep A Pulse On Employees

A sure-fire way to deliver strong client and resident experiences is ensuring staff are enabled and empowered to do so. When it comes to employee experience, there's a lot to think about. There are the little day-to-day issues that inhibit employees from doing their job well, through to the larger physical and mental challenges that aged care employees deal with, particularly as residents get older and less well.

*Here are some pro-tips for managing the employee experience:*

**Check In Regularly:** Provide employees with an opportunity to regularly share their voice and experiences with full transparency. This will help to eliminate roadblocks and leave room to make improvements.

### **Collaborate, Collaborate, Collaborate!**

Look for opportunities to involve staff in feedback findings, develop solutions and put new actions in place. Inspire your frontline team to be involved with taking on practical changes that improve the experience for all employees. Often

the best opportunities are found by the people on the frontline who are experiencing the issues first hand.

**Use Technology to Connect With Employees:** Technology is vital for two-way communication with employees. In the aged care industry where many are either casual or part-time workers, it's important to keep staff updated and connected as well as collect the feedback they want to share. So how do you tap into this resource? The secret starts with listening to your staff through a Voice of Employee program.

**Celebrate Positive Staff Behaviours:** One of the most important ways to drive positive momentum is to recognise it and celebrate it. Understand and celebrate the micro-wins happening every day that make a big difference to clients and residents. Let staff know what they are doing that clients and residents really appreciate to encourage more of this behaviour and inspire others to want to do the same.

**Highlight Positive Stories:** Humans connect to stories, especially emotional stories. So, sharing positive, action-oriented CX stories across the organisation will help employees understand the 'why' behind improving experiences for clients and residents. It shows feedback is being taken seriously and change is happening. It drives trust in the program. It sends the message that when employees take the time to provide their feedback, someone is listening and ready to take action. This encourages more employees to contribute, which in turn drives further positive change.



# We'll Take On The Challenge With You

At InMoment, our clients around the region are shifting their programs to meet federal regulations and new consumer expectations. At UnitingCare Queensland, the business is focused on re-evaluating all consumer journeys, listening to the feedback of carers and residents, and actually putting these data-led insights into practice. Our InMoment Client Success Managers and Consulting Team is helping the UnitingCare Queensland Customer Insights team every step of the way—and we can help you, too.

**Get in touch by phone or email to chat through your brand's unique needs.**



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## About InMoment

Improving experiences is why InMoment exists. Our mission is to help our clients improve experiences at the intersection of value—where customer, employee, and business needs come together. The heart of what we do is connect our clients with what matters most through a unique combination of data, technology, and human expertise. With our hyper-modern technology platform, decades of domain authority, and global teams of experts, we uniquely deliver a focus on Experience Improvement (XI) to help our clients own the moments that matter. Take a moment and learn more at [inmoment.com](https://inmoment.com)

