

Aged Care Delegation Blueprint

**Decision Authority, Responsibility &
Escalation Framework**

Example file

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Overview

This framework defines and clearly illustrates how decision-making operates across multiple teams in processes that rely on numerous roles and interdependencies, ensuring clarity of responsibilities, accountability, escalation pathways, and risk ownership and reduction.

Teams involved:

- Care Coordination Teams
- Client Engagement Team
- Brokerage
- Rostering
- Workforce Leadership (excludes frontline staff)
- Practice & Assurance
- Business Solutions

Decision Governance Model

This model outlines how decisions are structured across Aged Care by defining four clear levels of authority, from frontline teams through to Senior Leadership Team (SLT). It provides a simple framework to ensure decisions are made at the right level, by the right role, based on the risk, impact, and scope of the issue.

By separating decision-making into layers, from day-to-day client coordination, through operational management, regional oversight, and up to strategic and regulatory governance - the model strengthens accountability, consistency, and escalation clarity across all teams.

In essence, it ensures that routine decisions stay close to the frontline, while higher-risk or complex decisions are escalated appropriately, supporting safe, efficient, and well-governed service delivery.

Decision Governance Table

Level	Role	Decision Scope
L1- Frontline Execution	<i>Eg</i> <i>Care Coordinators</i> <i>Client Specialists</i>	<i>Eg</i> <i>Client level decisions, service coordination</i> <i>Customer service</i>
L2- Operational Control	<i>To populate</i>	<i>Eg</i> <i>Program & team-level decisions</i>
L3-Regional Governance	<i>To populate</i>	<i>Eg</i> <i>Financial, risk, performance oversight</i>
L4 – Enterprise Governance	<i>To populate</i>	<i>Eg</i> <i>Strategic, regulatory, high-risk decisions</i>

Decision Ownership by Function

Aged Care service delivery relies on multiple teams and roles working together across complex processes. Given this level of interdependency, it is essential to clearly define where decision ownership resides within each function to ensure accountability, clarity, and effective outcomes.

Decision Ownership by Function Table

Function	Core Ownership	What They Decide	What They Do <u>NOT</u> Do	Escalation Path
Example Client Engagement Team (CET)	Front-end intake, referrals, onboarding and customer service	Initial client intake decisions, service entry eligibility, information gathering, triage of needs	Ongoing care decisions, service delivery changes, workforce or rostering decisions	- Care Manager - Workforce Manager - Roster Manager

Escalation Triggers

Escalation triggers are specific situations, risks, or signals that tell a staff member they must stop managing an issue alone and pass it to someone with higher authority or expertise.

- Within Scope & low risk: you handle it
- Outside your scope & / or higher risk: you escalate

Escalation Triggers Remove Guesswork and Ensure:	Without Clear Triggers:	With Clear Triggers:
• The right person makes the decision • Risks are managed early (not after a failure) • Teams don't hold onto issues or concerns too long	⚠ Staff hesitate or delay escalation ⚠ Issues get worse before action is taken ⚠ Risk, compliance, and client & staff safety are compromised	- Faster decisions - Better risk control - Clear accountability - Safer outcomes

Escalation Trigger by Function:

Function	Trigger	Escalation Path
Example Care Coordination	• Client risk / safeguarding concern • Budget breach or funding non-compliance • Clinical deterioration • Complex care needs • Repeated service failure	Care Coordinator → Care Manager →ROM → Practice
<i>To populate</i>	<i>To populate</i>	<i>To populate</i>

Risk and Decision Matrix (Operational Use)

This Risk & Decision Matrix provides a clear, structured approach to assessing risk and determining who should make decisions at each level of the organisation. It is designed to help teams quickly identify the level of risk involved in a situation, understand their decision authority, and know when escalation is required.

The matrix categorises risk into four levels: Low, Moderate, High, and Critical, each linked to:

- The impact and severity of the situation
- The appropriate decision-maker
- The required escalation response

By aligning risk levels with decision authority, the framework ensures that:

- Routine, low-risk decisions stay with frontline teams
- More complex or higher-risk issues are escalated appropriately
- Serious risks are managed quickly at the right level of leadership

This approach reduces uncertainty, strengthens accountability, and supports safe, consistent, and compliant decision-making across all teams.

In essence, it acts as a practical guide for staff to assess risk, make confident decisions within their role, and escalate when the situation requires higher oversight.

Example framework - customise to your context

Risk Classification Framework:

Risk Level	Definition	Examples	Decision Authority	Escalation Requirement
 LOW	Routine, low impact, reversible	Minor service changes, scheduling updates, routine client requests	Care Coordinator / Client Specialist Officer / Roster Officer / Brokerage Officer	No escalation formal reporting
 MODERATE	Operational impact, risk manageable	Budget nearing limits, service delays, repeated complaints	Care Manager / Workforce Lead / Rostering Lead / CET Lead	Escalate if unresolved within 24-48 hours & formal reporting
 HIGH	Significant risk to client, staff or compliance	Safeguarding concerns, serious service failure, financial breach	Care Manager → ROM Workforce Manager Rostering Manager	Immediate escalation & formal reporting
 CRITICAL	Immediate harm or regulatory breach	Abuse, neglect, SIRS, legal issue, severe injury	ROM / Practice / SLT	Immediate escalation & formal reporting

Decision Authority Matrix

The Decision Authority Matrix provides a clear and structured guide to who is responsible for making decisions across different levels of risk and operational scenarios. It links common decision types, such as intake, client care, workforce issues, rostering and compliance, to the appropriate decision-maker based on the level of risk involved.

By organising decisions across four risk levels (Low, Moderate, High, Critical), the matrix ensures that:

- Routine decisions remain with frontline teams
- More complex issues are managed by operational leaders
- High-risk matters receive appropriate oversight
- Critical issues are escalated to governance and executive levels

This approach strengthens accountability, consistency, and decision clarity, helping teams understand both their authority and their limits.

What this means in practice:

- Staff can quickly identify who owns a decision based on the situation
- Decisions are made at the lowest appropriate level, reducing delays
- Higher-risk issues are escalated quickly and appropriately
- Clear ownership reduces duplication, confusion, and gaps in accountability

In essence, the matrix ensures that decisions are made by the right role, at the right level, at the right time, supporting safe, efficient, and well-governed service delivery.

Decision Authority Matrix Table

Decision Type	Low Risk	 Moderate Risk	 High Risk	 Critical Risk
Intake	Client Specialist Officer	CET Lead	Care Manager	ROM → Practice / SLT
Client Care (plans, services)	Care Coordinator	Care Manager	ROM → Practice	SLT
Client Expenditure	Care Coordinator (<\$X)	Care Manager (<\$Y)	ROM (>\$Z)	SLT
<i>Incident Management</i>	<i>To populate</i>	<i>To populate</i>	<i>To populate</i>	<i>To populate</i>
<i>Workforce issue</i>				
<i>Example</i>				
<i>Example</i>				
<i>Example</i>				
<i>Example</i>				

Decision Flow Guide

This Decision Flow Guide provides a simple, practical approach for frontline staff to quickly assess situations, make decisions with confidence, and know when to escalate. It breaks decision-making into three clear steps: identify risk, check authority, and act or escalate, so staff can respond consistently in real time.

The guide is designed to support safe, efficient, and accountable decision-making by ensuring that:

- Staff act within their role and delegation
- Risk is identified early and clearly
- Higher-risk situations are escalated appropriately and without delay



Situation	Action
Within authority & low risk	Act immediately
Moderate risk	● Act & notify Manager
High risk	● Escalate immediately
Critical	🚨 Stop, escalate, activate emergency process

Cross-Team Risk Ownership:

Clarity in which team is ultimately responsible for key risk areas across Aged Care, particularly where multiple teams are involved. The below table defines a primary owner for each critical function, supported by other teams, to ensure clear accountability and coordination.

By making ownership explicit, it helps prevent confusion, duplication, and gaps in responsibility, especially in areas where unclear roles can lead to client / staff harm, service disruption or compliance breaches.

Area	Primary Owner	Supporting Teams	Risk if Unclear
Client care decisions	<i>To populate</i>	<i>To populate</i>	<i>Eg Client harm</i>
Staffing capacity			
Scheduling			
External services			
Compliance & incidents			
Department /funding reporting			