

# Royal Commission Final Report released

1 March 2021

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has today released its [Final Report](#), entitled **Care, Dignity and Respect**.

ACSA is a member of the Australian Aged Care Collaboration (AACC), which is campaigning for comprehensive reform of aged care. Today, the AACC released [this statement](#) in response to the Report.

The Final Report is a comprehensive five-volume roadmap to fundamental reform of the aged care system, critiquing the current system and putting forth 148 recommendations for transformation over a five-year period.

These recommendations are detailed and thorough, spanning all key touchpoints of aged care, the highlights of which include:

## **System Design and Governance**

- A new Act, centred on a universal entitlement for high quality and safe care to older people, based on need and not rationed.
- An integrated system for long term support and care of older people combining CHSP, home care and residential aged care.
- A System Governor to provide leadership, and an Inspector-General to investigate systemic issues.

## **Quality and Safety**

- A plan to deliver high quality care including standard setting, graded assessments, and star rating.
- Clear the prioritisation list in home care by December 2021.
- Increased access to medicine reviews.
- A single comprehensive assessment by an independent assessor of providers, with entry into system supported by care finders.

## **Aged Care Accommodation**

- Construction design principles for aged care accommodation, with a focus on small house design.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People**

- Specific arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with ATSI pathways and a new ATSI Commissioner.

## **Regional, Rural and Remote**

- Equitable access for regional, rural and remote communities to aged care services, with access to telehealth and specialists, and continuation of MPS services.

### **Better Access to Health Care**

- Establish a senior dental benefit scheme.
- A new primary health care model, and improved transition between aged care and health.

### **Younger People in Residential Aged Care**

- Timetable for arrangements to ensure younger people do not enter or remain in residential aged care by 2022-25 progressively.

### **Aged Care Workforce**

- A workforce strategy to professionalise the workforce, a National Registration scheme for personal care workers, and a minimum Certificate 3 qualification for personal care workers.
- Collaboration between Unions, Government and providers to vary sector wages, with remuneration to reflect work value.
- The Pricing Authority should take into account need to attract staff and remuneration levels.
- A minimum quality and safety standard for staff time in residential aged care, including appropriate skills mix and daily minimum staff time for registered nurses, enrolled nurses and personal care workers for each resident, and at least one registered nurse on site at all times.
- Reporting of staffing hours.

### **Governance**

- Improved governance arrangements around complaints, serious incident reporting, and new prudential requirements.
- Wider enforcement powers to the quality regulator.

### **Funding & Finance**

- An independent Pricing Authority to determine the cost of high-quality care.
- Amendments to indexing arrangements for both Residential aged care and home care.
- A \$10 fee increase per resident per day of basic daily fee in residential care.
- In-home care maximum funding to equal residential care.
- Continuing the 30% viability supplement in residential care.
- Address transparency in home care, i.e., standardised statements.
- In Home care, individuated budgets or a casemix approach; in Residential Care a casemix approach.

## **Separate Recommendations**

In an unusual development, Commissioners Pagone and Briggs offered separate recommendations around some key areas. These included:

- **Oversight of the sector.** Commissioner Pagone recommended an independent Commission, while Commissioner Briggs recommended a revamped Department of Health and Ageing.

- **A new aged care financing system.** The Commissioners agreed on the introduction of a levy on taxable income to finance aged care, but Commissioner Pagone suggested it should be a hypothecated 1% levy of taxable personal income, and Commissioner Briggs recommended an ongoing, non-hypothecated levy.
- **A new primary care model to improve access.** Commissioner Pagone recommended a trial program for six to ten years starting from 1 January 2024, while Commissioner Briggs said the Government should simply implement it by 2024.

While it is disappointing that some Royal Commission recommendations were not unanimous, it is by no means an excuse to delay major aged care reform. There is no question around the Commissioners' findings that the aged care system requires a complete overhaul, and this is the vital message that Government must act on.

## ACSA's Response

The Final Report is a critical watershed moment in Australia's quest for a fair and just system that gives older people the care and choice that they need and deserve.

ACSA will consider the report in more detail and provide further advice and analysis over coming days.

Register for ACSA's [Impact & Analysis of the Royal Commission Report Online Symposium](#), to be held on Thursday 11 and Friday 12 March. Over two days, we will unpack the Commission's final report, examine its impacts and analyse what comes next for Australia's aged care sector and your organisation.

## Government's Interim Response

It is now up to the Government to respond to the Royal Commission's recommendations.

The Prime Minister today announced an investment of \$452.2m as a starting point for reform, stating that the 2021 Budget will form the basis of the Government's substantive response. [Read the full announcement](#)

ACSA welcomes this announcement and we look forward to engaging with Government to implement the recommendations.