

Waiting for action is not an option for elderly

MEDIA RELEASE THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER 2019

Thousands of older Australians should not have to wait another 12 months to receive safe and quality care as is likely under present plans, the Consumers Health Forum said today.

"There is no question that our aged care system requires urgent attention," the CEO of Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said in releasing CHF's submission to the Royal Commission on Safety and Quality in Aged Care.

"Any reasonable person who reads in our submission the heart-wrenching stories of the gruelling and heedless treatment experienced by residents in institutions around Australia will wonder how a civilised society could put up with this longer than absolutely necessary.

"The submission makes 13 recommendations for sweeping change including more and better training, improved staff ratios, more unannounced inspections and more access of consumers to inspections and assessments.

"We are concerned the recent announcement of a six-month extension to the Royal Commission will delay the Government taking action to address the serious problems in our aged care system.

"We support the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation call on the Federal Government to act now. Older Australians should not have to wait another 12-months to receive safe, quality and patient-centred care.

"The Commission should include reasonable timeframes, in consultation with relevant organisations, for all its recommendations." Ms Wells said.

CHF also surveyed carers, family members and staff, and while the survey was of a relatively small sample it showed a consistent pattern of poor and indifferent care at a significant number of facilities.

A third of respondents to the survey said they did not feel confident that care was safe and right for the person involved. Just on half of respondents said they felt staff members were kind and caring, 65 per cent said they did not feel staff had enough

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time to deliver care and services and fewer than 40 per cent felt that medication was managed well through the aged care service.

CHF's recommendations to the Royal Commission include:

- Support to ensure mandatory high-quality staff training, particularly in relation to caring for patients with dementia and alternatives to restrictive practices.
- More funding to build the capacity of the aged care workforce to deliver high quality and person-centred care.
- Mandating appropriate ratio of skilled staff to aged care residents.
- Reforms to medication management including embedding pharmacists in facilities.
- Increase frequency of unannounced, randomised inspections conducted by accreditation bodies for aged care at least once a year and extra targeted inspection for at-risk providers.
- Involve inspectors speaking with a higher percentage (at least 20%) of residents, and with families about the care and without the provider necessarily knowing they are going to have that conversation.
- Involve consumers in the assessor workforce which accredits community and residential aged care.

See the CHF submission [here](#)

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