



The Older Women's Network NSW respectfully requests the Commissioners to consider the following in its final report:-

- (i) **Sexual Assaults/Abuse:** It is vital to acknowledge the scale of abuse which takes place in residential aged care facilities and to highlight the rate of sexual abuse. Counsel Assisting has noted that 3% of submissions to the Commission has focused on sexual abuse. While this seems like a small percentage, the reality is that there are an estimated 1730 cases of sexual abuse in nursing homes with no action being taken by the Government to address this. Without the Commissioners making note of this fact, we have no confidence that the situation will change in any way.
We are also very concerned as to who will have the responsibility of ensuring that older people receiving care in their own homes are protected from abuse/assaults. The way home care packages are structured, delivered, monitored, managed and evaluated must also form a core part of the final report. There are more older people on home care packages than there are in residential aged care facilities.
- (ii) **Ratios in care:** The evidence presented to the Commission point clearly to the fact that the level and quality of care in residential facilities are not up to standard. We strongly support ratios in care and encourage the Commissioners to use the modelling put forward by the ANMF Staffing and Skills mix report.
- (iii) **Consumer voice:** The role of providers in setting the parameters of aged care must now be balanced by the inclusion of the consumer voice. We urge the inclusion of consumers/carers in every committee where providers are represented; and for the principle to be set whereby reference groups are established to provide feedback on new/existing policies and for consumers to be represented.
While it is convenient for the government to revert to the standard consumer organisations such as COTA Australia, we request the Commissioners to make note that representation of older people extend beyond these 'usual suspects', and for the net to be cast wider to include advocacy groups such as the Older Women's Network.
- (iv) **Profiteering:** We do not believe that aged care should be run as a profit making enterprise. The evidence presented before the Royal Commission has demonstrated that neglect and dangerous levels of care are associated with providers who cut corners and staff to turn in a profit. We also call for forensic accounting to be put in place before any increase in funding is provided, and for any new legislation to make it mandatory for all government funding for individual care be spent on care.
We are also concerned that the current recommendations do not address the issue of profiteering on home care packages with administration/management costs being set at levels which at times exceed the actual cost of the service provided. This has to be addressed.
- (v) **Continuum of services/health care:** While it is important to a dedicated aged care infrastructure, it is equally important that there is a seamless connectivity between the other government ministries and departments which deal with issues related to ageing, including housing, health care and community services. This is especially true for indigenous affairs.