

## MEDIA RELEASE

13 September 2018

# COTA Australia welcomes release of Aged Care Workforce Report

Australia's peak consumer body for older Australians, COTA Australia, welcomes the recommendations outlined in the *A Matter of Care – Australia's aged care workforce strategy* released today, and is calling on the Government to act swiftly to work with consumer, union and provider representatives to implement the key recommendations of the report.

The Aged Care Workforce Strategy Taskforce was assigned the task of developing a strategy for growing and sustaining the aged care workforce so that it can better meet the demands of our ageing population.

COTA Australia welcomes the commitment to lift the profile and status of the industry and workforce and supports in principle the 14 strategic actions areas for Australia's current and future aged care workforce outlined in the report.

Chief Executive of COTA Australia and Taskforce member, Ian Yates, said the release of the strategy today is a crucial step in ensuring the Government and sector can manage the unique set of demands and pressures placed on the aged care workforce as a result of Australia's ageing population.

"COTA Australia welcomes in particular the recommendations to better reflect the value and contribution of personal care workers and nurses by improving their current pay deficiencies; identifying the appropriate skills mix of staff in a facility; and developing new career paths so workers can stay in aged care throughout their careers.

"The Strategy identifies the need to reframe the public's perception of aged care into an industry that all Australians could aspire to work in by changing today's negative attitudes to ageing into tomorrow's caring industry of choice.

"Older Australians constantly tell us that staff attitudes and skills are one of the most important aspects of aged care to them. Ensuring we can recruit and retain the most dedicated, highest skilled and most empathetic staff is critical to continuing to deliver the very best quality care to Australians in later life," said Mr Yates.

COTA Australia welcomes the establishment of the Australian Industry and Skills Committee's Aged Services Industry Reference Group, which will oversee reform of the skills and qualification framework.

"Ensuring students wanting to work in aged care not only receive high-quality training but also have a practical understanding of what it's like to work in aged care will ensure they are job ready with the right attitude and skills when they attain their qualifications," said Mr Yates.

COTA Australia welcomes the introduction of more dynamic, adaptable job pathways which recognise and respond to the emergence of new roles based more on integrated and living well models of care.

"The aged care sector is changing rapidly and over the next decade we need to support the emergence of new models of care which will require new culture and new roles and job skill-sets.

"It's absolutely critical we develop, fund and implement a workforce strategy which is not static in time and responds to the evolving, changing needs of older Australians," said Mr Yates.

COTA Australia looks forward to working with the Government, providers and, other key stakeholders to ensure the recommendations of the strategy are rolled out in a timely and efficient manner.

**Media contact: Ian Yates 0418 835 439, Bronte Kerr 0411 676 269**

**COTA Australia is the peak policy development, advocacy and representation organisation for older Australians, representing COTAs in every State and Territory and through them over 500,000 older Australians.**