

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Royal Commission clear – get cracking on major overhaul of aged care**

The final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety released today places the onus on the Morrison Government to address systemic issues with home care, nursing home regulation, staffing and transparency, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia has said.

“When it comes to the crisis consuming our aged care system, the Royal Commissioners are unanimous in identifying the issues of neglect, abuse, indifference and poor leadership,” COTA Australia Chief Executive Ian Yates AM said.

“It’s now the Federal Government’s job to map out the structural reforms needed to build a safer, accessible and transparent system in an accountable way.

“The fact that there are a few alternative recommendations from the Commissioners on the best way to manage and fund the aged care system in no way lets government off the hook. There are no barriers to commencing urgent and long-awaited reforms.”

COTA will be reviewing the final report when released and will engage with the Government to argue for the following reforms to be prioritised:

1. **Home Care without waiting:** “The government must ensure that by the end of 2022 all older people get the home care they need, when they need it. Australians want their care at home and must be supported to stay there as long as they can instead of being forced into residential care against their wishes.”
2. **Stronger Regulator:** “The government needs a strong regulator to punish bad providers and get them out of the system. Australia has some of the best aged care providers in the world, but at least one-third of them are failing older people. We need a tougher cop on the beat to crack down on abuse caused by bad leadership, lack of clinical governance, low staff numbers and secrecy.”
3. **Star rating system for staffing:** “Bolstering our aged care workforce is essential. There’s not enough staff, they aren’t trained enough, and they aren’t paid enough. The government must introduce a star rating system to mandate increased staffing, tailored to resident needs, and link any additional government funding to ensure it is spent on staff.”
4. **Consumer control and rights:** “We need a new Aged Care Act grounded in human rights. This must give older people control of their own care decisions and create enforceable rights and protections for older Australians receiving aged care.”
5. **Transparency:** “It is vital the Government increases transparency across the whole system. This means real transparency about quality measures so people can make informed decisions based on simple information that is easy to access, and make sure providers come clean about what exactly older people and their families will be asked to pay for.”

“The evidence is overwhelming: we need a major transformation of the system, and older Australians shouldn’t wait a day longer than needed to be guaranteed choice, dignity and quality in aged care,” says Mr Yates.

“My heartfelt gratitude goes to the Commissioners who have worked for over two years to produce these incredibly comprehensive findings. The ball is now in the government’s court, and there’s no excuse for inaction.”

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**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.**