



Tuesday 19 February 2019

## Dementia must be a priority now and into the future

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe addressed the Royal Commission into Aged Care Safety and Quality in Adelaide today highlighting the impact of dementia in Australia - on Australians - and reinforced that dementia must be core business for aged care.

"Dementia is the chronic disease of the 21<sup>st</sup> century," Ms McCabe said.

"It needs to be a priority for the health and aged care industries, a Federal election priority and an ongoing budget priority.

"With more than 438,000 people currently living with dementia, which is projected to increase to almost 1.1 million people by 2058, we will all know somebody impacted by dementia.

"One in three of us in this room will develop dementia at some point and we need to know how best to support the people who receive a diagnosis as well as the families and carers around them.

"More than half of those living in residential aged care have a diagnosis of dementia and they tend to have much higher care needs than residents who do not have dementia, while around 70 per cent of people with dementia live in the community.

"Dementia is the second leading cause of death of Australians and already the leading cause of death of women in Australia and yet we know there is a lack of understanding and awareness generally that hinders people accessing services and support.

"The future has arrived. It is up to us to maximise this Royal Commission as a once in a generation opportunity to transform the industry to make a profound and lasting difference to the lives of all people impacted by dementia.

"I thank Commissioners Briggs and Tracey for including Dementia Australia in this Royal Commission."

Dementia Australia's Witness Statement to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety along with a transcript of today's proceedings will be available on the Royal Commission website later today.

To read Dementia Australia's media comments and opinion editorials about the Royal Commission visit <https://www.dementia.org.au/royal-commission>.

Dementia Australia is the national peak body and charity for people, of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. An estimated 436,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach almost 1.1 million by 2058. Dementia Australia is the new voice of Alzheimer's Australia. Dementia Australia's services are supported by the Australian Government.

**National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500**

**Interpreter service available**

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

**Dementia is a National Health Priority Area**

[www.dementia.org.au](http://www.dementia.org.au)

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When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia Language Guidelines](#).