

Tuesday 23 February 2021

## **‘Carpe diem’ for quality dementia care - Royal Commission Report**

The release of the final report by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is due to be handed to the federal government on 26 February and will be a defining moment for all Australians.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is a once in a generation opportunity to transform dementia care and the aged care system overall.

“We expect the federal government and the sector will commit to significant investment and transformation that will make a profound difference to the experience of people affected by dementia –now and for generations to come,” Ms McCabe said.

Thousands of people of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers have shared their very personal, often traumatic and confronting experiences directly with the Royal Commission as witnesses, through submissions, by attending roundtables and community forums since September 2018.

**Grahame Smith** who is living with dementia said, “I would love to see the adoption all of the recommendations from the Royal Commission, not just the easy ones, and to provide adequate funding to employ enough of the right staff in the aged care sector.”

“Quality dementia care is important because those living in aged care homes are the most vulnerable. It is vital those who can’t speak for themselves are cared for with compassion and understanding.”

**Nell Hawe** who is living with dementia said, “My hope for the future of aged care in Australia is to provide quality holistic person-centred care by suitably trained staff to those people living with dementia and others using aged care, and their carers and families.”

**Anne Fairhall**, long-term family carer and Dementia Australia Honoree said, “Having gained extensive lived-experience over many years negotiating the often complex and broken current home and residential aged care system, I urge the government now to be ready to demonstrate swift action to rebuild the aged care system as ‘fit for purpose’ and enable it to deliver consistent quality care for all Australians, as I am sure will be recommended in the Royal Commission report.”

“As the organisation that represents and is the voice of people of all ages living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers in Australia, we will champion the voices of our consumers and advocate for these changes,” Ms McCabe said.

Dementia Australia along with people impacted by dementia, have been exploring the key challenges and solutions to improve the quality of dementia care and have presented a clear roadmap for change to government. These challenges and solutions are:

- A roadmap for sector transformation, that tracks and measures the impact of reform
- An integrated service and support pathway that ensures people with dementia, their families and carers receive the support they need

- A workforce that has the skill and capacity to support people impacted by dementia
- Physical environments that are enabling and promote independence and autonomy.

“We are already working with the government advocating for these improvements,” Ms McCabe said.

“With almost half a million Australians living with dementia and with this figure projected to increase to 1.1 million people by 2058<sup>1</sup>, now is the time to act.

“Getting quality care right for people living with dementia will have a profound and lasting, impact for all – systemically, economically and as a human right. It is our responsibility as a society to provide appropriate care for those who are most vulnerable.”

For reference: [Dementia Australia's Roadmap to Quality Dementia Care](#) and [‘Our Solution: Quality Care for People Living With Dementia’](#), a communique developed with people impacted by dementia through extensive consultation and presented to the federal government and sector in July 2019.



Dementia Advocates at the National Consumer Summit, Canberra, June 2019

Dementia Australia is the source of trusted information, education and services for the estimated half a million Australians living with dementia, and the almost 1.6 million people involved in their care. We advocate for positive change and support vital research. We are here to support people impacted by dementia, and to enable them to live as well as possible. No matter how you are impacted by dementia or who you are, we are here for you.

For support, please contact the **National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500**. An interpreter service is available and the Helpline is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. The National Dementia Helpline is funded by the Australian Government. People looking for information can also visit [dementia.org.au](http://dementia.org.au)

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

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<sup>1</sup> Dementia Australia (2018) Dementia Prevalence Data 2018-2058, commissioned research undertaken by NATSEM, University of Canberra