



AGED CARE INQUIRY RECOMMENDS 24-HOUR REGISTERED NURSE AVAILABILITY IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

A Parliamentary Committee report has accepted many of the AMA’s recommendations on how to improve the care of vulnerable Australians in residential aged care facilities, including the need for more registered nurses.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, who appeared before the Inquiry in May, said that the recommendations of the Report on the Inquiry into the Quality of Care in Residential Aged Care Facilities in Australia largely align with AMA policy.

“It is critical that residents in aged care facilities, and the doctors visiting them, have access to appropriately trained staff at all times,” Dr Bartone said.

“The AMA has been advocating for a registered nurse-to-resident ratio that aligns with the level of care need, and ensures 24-hour registered nurse availability.

“The Committee has recommended that it be enshrined in law that all residential aged care facilities provide for a minimum of one registered nurse to be on-site at all times.

“This is a good first step. However, we recognise that one registered nurse will not be enough in many residential aged care facilities, which may have hundreds of frail residents.

“We are pleased that the Committee has further recommended that the Government specifically monitor and report on the correlation between standards of care, including complaints and findings of elder abuse, and staffing mixes to guide further decisions in relation to staffing requirements.

“In the most recent survey of AMA members who visit patients in residential aged care, more than one in three doctors said that they plan to cut back on or completely end their visits over the next two years, citing a lack of suitably trained and experienced nurses, and inadequate Medicare patient rebates.

“Our members are also concerned about the trend to replace registered and enrolled nurses with personal care attendants, who are not appropriately trained to deal with the health issues older people face.

“The Committee has acted on these concerns, recommending that the Government review the Medicare rebate for doctor visits to residential aged care facilities, and a review of the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) to ensure that it is providing adequate levels of care for the individual needs of aged care recipients.

“The AMA also notes the recommendation to improve the Community Visitors Program to ensure volunteers visiting aged care facilities are better able to respond to suspected abuse. The *AMA Position Statement on Health and Care of Older People 2018* called for education and training programs on the recognition, intervention, and management of elder abuse.

“While we have a Royal Commission, the AMA still urges the Government to act as a matter of urgency in responding to the many reviews that have now been completed. We have seen too many cases of abuse and neglect to delay action any further. The need for access to appropriate quality care cannot continue to be left unaddressed.”

The AMA Submission to the *Inquiry into the Quality of Care in Residential Aged Care Facilities in Australia* is at <https://ama.com.au/submission/ama-submission-house-representatives-standing-committee-health-aged-care-and-sport-%E2%80%93>

The AMA *Position Statement on Resourcing Aged Care 2018* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/aged-care-resourcing-2018>

The AMA *Position Statement on Health and Care of Older People 2018* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/health-and-care-older-people-%E2%80%93>

The AMA Submission to the Department of Health's *Draft Charter of Aged Care Rights* is at <https://ama.com.au/submission/ama-submission-department-health-%E2%80%93>

The AMA *Aged Care Survey* is at <https://ama.com.au/article/2017-ama-aged-care-survey>

The AMA *Position Statement on Health and Care of Older People 2018* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/health-and-care-older-people-%E2%80%93>

The AMA Submission to the consultation on the *Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety* is at <https://ama.com.au/submission/ama-submission-department-health-terms-reference-royal-commission-aged-care-quality-and>

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CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

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