



**LEADING AGE SERVICES**  
AUSTRALIA  
*The voice of aged care*

# Media release

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## Senate Report into Future of Australia's Aged Care Workforce

- **LASA acknowledges the professionalism and dedication of more than 360,000 aged care workers**
- **The cost of staff to care recipient ratios needs to be fully funded with demonstrated benefits to quality of care outcomes**
- **LASA looks forward to engaging with other stakeholders on a workforce strategy for our industry**

Chief Executive Officer of Australia's peak age services body, Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) Sean Rooney welcomed the release of the Senate's Community Affairs References Committee's, *Future of Australia's Aged Care Sector Workforce Report*.

"While this Report outlines a vision for the future of Australia's aged care workforce we must not forget to acknowledge the professionalism and dedication of more than 360,000 workers in our industry," Mr Rooney said.

"The current aged care workforce comprising volunteers and professionals who, day in and day out, provide high quality care for older Australians are directly responsible for Australia's internationally recognised, aged care system."

Mr Rooney said in the context of ongoing financial sustainability in the delivery of aged care services and the Report's recommendations regarding minimum staff to care recipient ratios and workforce remuneration, due consideration must be given to the operational funding and benefits of these initiatives.

"The 2011 Productivity Commission Report, *Caring for Older Australians*, highlighted 'superficial attractions' to mandatory staffing to care recipient ratios describing it as a 'blunt instrument' that is unlikely to be an efficient way to improve care,' Mr Rooney said.

"The aged care workforce needs to be flexible to respond to context and care needs, mandatory staffing to care recipient ratios would also 'eliminate incentives for providers to invest in innovative models of care'.

"Aged care workforce attraction, retention and development have already been adversely impacted by the previous removal of the *Payroll Tax Supplement*, fringe benefit tax components, the *Workforce Development Fund* and the *Dementia and Severe Behaviours Supplement*.

"Any recommendations to amend modern awards and staff to care recipient ratios in aged care cannot be considered without a cost benefit analysis demonstrating improved care outcomes for older Australians and the ongoing viability of providers of age services."

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Mr Rooney said it is documented in the Report that by 2050 we will need 980,000 aged care workers in the industry to meet the challenges of increased demand, consumer choice, a rapidly changing marketplace and the integration of new technologies.

“The current aged care workforce is ageing and needs to expand and change composition rapidly to meet the growth in demand for services,” Mr Rooney said.

“Our aged care workforce needs to be responsive to the changing needs and preferences of older Australians, it needs to engage with smart technologies and innovations in the provision of care, be adaptive to the ongoing consumer-centred reforms being rolled out by Government, and provide the appropriate quality of care.”

Mr Rooney said LASA looks forward to engaging with other stakeholders on a workforce strategy for our industry.

“LASA alongside other peak bodies have taken a lead role advocating to Government for an industry-led approach to developing an appropriate workforce strategy to address current and future issues.”

The future of Australia’s aged care workforce has been the focus of a long-running Senate Inquiry that started before last year’s Federal Election. LASA made a submission to the Inquiry early last year and gave evidence at the Future Aged Care Workforce Inquiry in November 2016.

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