

February 20, 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

Aged care peak bodies say quality not negotiable in aged care

The peak bodies representing Australia's aged care industry have said that the high quality of residential aged care is not negotiable, noting that a number of concerns regarding several Queensland facilities have been raised in the media today.

The chief executives of peak bodies Leading Age Services Australia (LASA), Sean Rooney and Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA), Pat Sparrow, said all within the industry have a role to play in continuously maintaining and improving on high standards in quality care and service.

"We recognise the challenges faced by providers striving every day to deliver care that consistently meets the standards and expectations of residents and the community. Age services providers, government and the wider community all share a desire for a high-performing aged care sector.

"Failures identified must be addressed to retain the confidence across older Australians, their families and the communities concerned. We work closely with our memberships to provide support to facilities seeking this continuous improvement," the CEO's said.

Ms Sparrow and Mr Rooney said the industry is also working closely with the Government to respond more broadly to quality concerns including the rollout of a single aged care quality framework and progression towards a new independent aged care commission.

"Collectively, we need to translate these developments into appropriate actions and outcomes that will address identified shortcomings and contribute to continuous improvement and community confidence," Ms Sparrow said.

"Our commitment to ensuring this outcome is emphatic. Our country needs an aged care system, including accreditation, that assures both the community and providers, of the safety, wellbeing and quality of life for older Australians living in residential aged care.

"Australia's current quality framework is resulting in the overwhelming majority of Australians in aged care and their families receiving high quality care, support and services that meet national standards," Mr Rooney said.

The peak bodies representing the nation's aged-care providers said quality and standards in aged care are intrinsically linked to the industry's workforce.

"We believe that the ongoing debate around staffing in aged care facilities would be better served by focusing on the quality of outcomes via optimising models of care for older Australians, rather than mandating staffing ratios.

"The basis for deciding on staffing levels and their skills mix needs to be driven by the actual care needs of individual residents.

"The aged care system we have is one that is overwhelmingly delivering the care that older Australians need and deserve. But it is also a system that recognises there are challenges and is committed to continuous improvement.

“A focus on clear, quality outcomes and innovation to drive new models of care, along with adequate and stable funding, and workforce development strategies, are among the highest priorities,” Ms Sparrow and Mr Rooney said.

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