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Statement in response to Queensland Government proposal to legislate disclosure of staffing levels

Leading Age Services Australia (LASA), the voice of aged care, calls on the Queensland Government to work with the Commonwealth and the other states and territories on a comprehensive national approach to staffing levels in aged care, rather than going its own way without industry consultation.

The State Government has announced that all residential aged care facilities in Queensland will be asked to publicly report their staffing information under proposed legislation.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk announced a new website to increase transparency of safety and quality information within public and private hospitals, as well as public and private residential aged care facilities in Queensland, to increase public access to such information and awareness.

The Queensland Government has told LASA that participation by non-Government residential aged care services is voluntary, but those who do not participate may be named on the website.

LASA says aged care is regulated by the Commonwealth, which is already currently considering a recommendation from a recent Parliamentary Committee report on staffing disclosure, so it is unclear if the Queensland Government's planned approach will duplicate this.

LASA fully supports providing older Australians with appropriate information to assist them in making important decisions about their care needs and the organisations that can provide services and support to meet them. However, LASA's view is that outcome based measures, particularly those based on direct consumer feedback, are likely to be most useful for consumers to identify which services will best meet their needs.

Furthermore, the number and mix of staff in residential care services is determined by a range of factors. Key drivers that determine the levels and mix of staff in residential care facilities include the needs of residents, the design of the buildings and the models of care in place.

As Queensland Health Minister Steven Miles said in *The Australian* last year, "staff ratios depend on the facility and clinical need.....Improving care in residential care facilities is more than just a numbers game".

A stark illustration of this were the tragic failings at the Oakden Older Persons Mental Health Facility in South Australia, which had above industry average levels of staff and registered nurses. However, more staff with high levels of qualifications in this service did not translate into high standards of care.

With regards to staffing levels in aged care LASA CEO Sean Rooney said, "LASA Members have consistently expressed their desire, and their need, to have more staff to deliver care and support to older Australians, and that these staff need to be appropriately skilled and qualified, as well as adequately remunerated. However, with government subsidies not keeping pace with the ever increasing costs of providing care and support, this constrains the ability of providers to consistently meet high standards."

LASA has recently called on Government yet again to ensure that providers of age services are resourced appropriately in order to effectively meet the needs of the older Australians they care for and support.

About Leading Age Services Australia (LASA)

LASA is the national peak body representing and supporting providers of age services across residential care, home care and retirement living. Our purpose is to enable a high performing, respected, and sustainable age services industry delivering accessible, affordable, quality care and services for older Australians.

We represent providers of age services of all types and sizes located across Australia's metropolitan, regional and rural areas. Consistent with the overall industry profile, 57% of our Members are not-for-profit providers, 33% are for-profit providers and 10% are government providers.

Our diverse and representative membership gives LASA the ability to speak with credibility and authority on issues of importance to older Australians and the age services industry.

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