

Aged Care and Other Legislation Amendment (Royal Commission Response No. 2) Bill 2021  
Submission



**“ADDITIONAL INFORMATION”**

**AGED CARE AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT (ROYAL COMMISSION  
RESPONSE NO. 2) BILL 2021**

**AAC – ALLIED AGED CARE RESPONSE TO THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
(November 2021)**

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Supporter's Letters and Stories (provided with author's permission)

Well done and keep fighting.

Please whenever you mention the words "Allied Health" include "physiotherapy" and "occupational therapy" as many consider allied health to be art and music therapy and pastoral care,

Thanks

**P.C.**

Allied Health, especially physiotherapy is essential to keep my mother-in-law mobile and active. At 96 years, stopping physiotherapy will contribute to her becoming bed bound and requiring more nursing.

**Pauline**

Dear Mark Butler MP,

As the wife/carer of a man who lived with stroke for 43 years, I want to voice my concern re Residential Care Allied Health Levels (which are currently minimal) - and NOT included at all in the Funding Model proposed for 2022.

As a volunteer I now see residents being offered only "lip-service" exercises once or twice a week, offered by volunteers NOT therapists, and individual therapy needs being limited to items such as Hand arthritis pain relief -seemingly often ignoring the functional needs of the residents.

This leads often to rapid deterioration both physically, and mentally. To now think that even the current very limited services will not even be including in the new Funding Plan, is totally contrary to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aged Care. As South Australia's population ages, the future seems bleak. I ask you to investigate and do your best to change the new Proposed Plan.

Yours sincerely,

**M.M.**

**South Australia, 5011, Australia**

Dear Michelle Rowland MP,

As you are my member and I have my father in a nursing home I would like to bring to your attention the likelihood of the government withdrawing funds to the ACM which supplies health support to the elderly. My father as most residents in his nursing home need weekly physio sessions to prevent falls and podiatry sessions to prevent infection and lack of mobility.

I cannot believe this government will take away from a generation that fought and built Australia in trying times. Not providing for our elderly and most vulnerable shows the lack of compassion of this government a government that will not receive my Vote if this situation goes ahead.

Yours sincerely,

**L.J.**

**New South Wales, 2768, Australia**

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Dear Jason Wood MP,

I would like to bring to your attention the terrible injustice to our elderly residing not only in aged care but all over our country. Why is the Gov't withdrawing it's funding of Allied Health? Personally my mum need special care. She suffers from COPD, Blind in one eye, very deaf, loss of mobility and has on top of all this vascular dementia. What do I tell her when her health needs can't be met. She is already being fleeced with costs and there are so many like her. Shame on the Morrison Gov't but there is hope to redeem itself on one level.

Yours sincerely,

**L.M.**

**Victoria, 3809, Australia**

Dear Josh Wilson MP,

The Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) funding model, which comes into effect from October 2022 will not specifically fund Allied Health services in aged care.

This means that instead of hands-on treatment for pain, our elders will be given more pain medication – which leads to more side effects. Older people will fall more and end up in hospital more. This is the crisis point. If the government doesn't amend the AN-ACC to include allied health, we will see a reduced standard of living in aged care and, we fear, more deaths.

In addition "Allied Health" includes mental health services which are already almost non-existent in aged care and in fact for older people in the community. Retirement and health issues tend to isolate people and allows time to ruminate and to fall into anxiety and/or depression. For healthier people and cost effective services over 60, all allied health care needs government support.

**G.G.**

Dear Mr O'Brien

I am writing to you because I am worried about the upcoming changes to funding for allied health in nursing homes, which is due to come into effect in October next year (AN-AAC). My mum is nearing the age where she might well need to enter a nursing home and she already has complex pain management needs. These changes suggest she won't be getting the care she needs. I'd appreciate it if you could use your position to advocate for the elderly.

**J.S. Qld**

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Mum had a fall at age 92 and was discharged from hospital with a sling for a displaced fracture of the right neck of humerus.

Sent home and within 3 days she was unable to walk due to an undiagnosed neck of femur fracture.

Surgery and good, regular physio got her back on her feet and she lived to 98+  
Allied Health is absolutely vital!

A.S.

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Having had my mother and mother-in-law both in residential aged care facilities, I have had the opportunity to experience firsthand the detrimental effects on the body caused by immobility which is well documented. If physiotherapy provides the possibility of reablement and pain reduction, especially in our vulnerable elders, it is something that should not be underestimated and should always be available to those in need. Please don’t let our elderly and vulnerable population down.

**M.R. Qld**

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As a General Practitioner with decades of experience in treating patients in aged care, I am dismayed at the proposed funding changes that could potentially deny residents access to vital allied health care services.

I have witnessed first hand the benefit of early and continued input from services such as physiotherapy, exercise physiology and occupational therapy in rehabilitating older Australians and helping them to maintain strength, mobility and independence with the basic activities of daily living. If these services are unavailable, irreversible frailty and a higher likelihood of falls are the inevitable consequences. Not only does this loss of function and independence have devastating physical and emotional effects on the individual and their family, the financial cost of looking after a person with high care needs vastly exceeds the cost of preventing such a condition in the first place.

An investment in allied health care amounts to a significant saving in potential acute hospital admissions and expensive nursing care. In the aged population especially, independence equates to dignity, and dignity is a basic human right at any age."

JN GP

We all know that without direct funding for physio of mandatory hours then it will be overlooked

A.C.

It seems counterintuitive that the new funding model, designed to improve the lives of people living in Aged Care, removes the mandated hours and funding for such a vital part of the care required to ensure our mums and dads are able to live comfortably and with reduced pain and increased movement.

The current funding model doesn't provide enough allied health or scope of practice - but fixing it by simply removing it altogether is just creating a much bigger problem. I can't imagine how pensioners are going to be able to afford to pay privately for ongoing services. I think it's horrific that some of our most vulnerable are having funding cut so dramatically in an area that significantly improves their quality of life - and I would like to know how the government plans to address this gap in the AN-ACC.

ML

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I have been a CEO in Aged Care for over 20 years. The most frequent questions my admissions staff were asked by prospective residents and their families related to Physiotherapy. Will I/my mum/my dad be able to get Physiotherapy? Will they be able to continue their rehab that commenced in hospital? How often is your Physio visiting the facility? How often will they be able to see a physio? I would like to be able to keep walking for as long as I can, I would like to be able to build a bit of strength up again. How much will it cost? Will I be able to afford it?”

The new funding system and the legislated services to be provided to residents need to answer these questions for the most vulnerable in our community.

**A.K.**