



**Submission to
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee's
Inquiry into Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018**

September 2018

Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW Inc (CPSA)

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CPSA is a non-profit, non-party-political membership association founded in 1931 which serves pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees. CPSA has a combined membership of over 23,000 people living throughout NSW. CPSA's aim is to improve the standard of living and well-being of its members and constituents. CPSA receives funding support from the NSW Government Departments of Family & Community Services and Health and the Australian Government Department of Social Service.

AGED CARE QUALITY AND SAFETY COMMISSION BILL 2018

CPSA is concerned that the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission as outlined in the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 in response to the Carnell-Patterson Review would commence operations while the Royal Commission into Safety and Quality of Aged Care is being conducted.

There is evidence that the Aged Care Quality Agency and the Department of Health have changed their approach to assessments of residential aged care facilities and that this has resulted in many more non-compliances being detected, sanctions being imposed and a significant number of facilities have had their accreditation terminated.

This compliance activity and the results of this compliance activity are encouraging. The results are in line with community perceptions of residential aged care.

CPSA considers that there is a case for putting the creation of a new agency on hold until the conclusion of the Royal Commission.

CPSA's view is reinforced by the fact that the Carnell Patterson Review also made recommendations in relation to other matters, including the appropriateness of accreditation standards. The Government has not specifically responded to those recommendations, other than to point out that the Single Quality Framework will start from 1 July 2019. There has been no reconciliation of the Carnell Patterson Review recommendations with the new standards under the Single Quality Framework.

It is also CPSA's view that the Royal Commission into Safety and Quality of Aged Care will unavoidably examine both the compliance, complaints and policy framework for aged care and the current accreditation standards and will come up with its recommendations in relation to both framework and standards.

It seems almost disrespectful for the Government to continue with aged care reforms when it has itself announced a Royal Commission into Safety and Quality of Aged Care. To institute a Royal Commission is to institute a powerful mechanism for information discovery. Instituting a Royal Commission implies that the Government does not have all the information and therefore not all the answers in relation to aged care. It also implies that the many inquiries into aged care conducted over recent years have not gotten to the bottom of the problems plaguing aged care. The logical course of action for the Government would be to put the creation of the Aged Care Quality and Safety Agency and the commencement of the Single Quality Framework on hold.

While CPSA supports some aged care reform and legislation enabling that reform pending the Royal Commission, that support is confined to:

1. initiatives to create greater transparency and better consumer information; and
2. to a crackdown on inadequate staffing through the current accreditation standards which following the Oakden scandal proved to be capable of working a lot better than CPSA had ever thought possible.

CPSA would like to qualify its remark on the effectiveness of the current accreditation standards: their relative and recent effectiveness seems to prove what CPSA has claimed many times previously, viz that these standards can be interpreted to mean anything depending on the approach taken by the assessors. The standards under the Single Quality Framework, which are even less specific than the current accreditation standards, suffer from the same defect but with even greater intensity.

CPSA's recommendation to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee's Inquiry into Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission Bill 2018 is therefore that the Bill should be delayed and subsequently considered in light of the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Safety and Quality in Aged Care.