



## **Submission for the senate enquiry**

I hereby provide the following information to be included for your consideration when making your assessments for the Finance and Public Administration Committee regarding funding for Aged Care.

I have worked in the aged care industry for a total of sixteen years commencing as a RN. I worked in two facilities before commencing here in 1995 as the DON and now do a dual role as CEO/DON in a 69 high care facility in Ulverstone Tasmania.

I will only offer input into part (a) and (b)

### **(a) Whether current funding levels are sufficient to meet the expected quality service provision outcomes.**

Depending on how quality is measured; the answer would be very different for a variety of service providers.

Aged Care has never been funded to enable us to forward plan to implement improved systems that would alleviate pressures. We are ever changing our client base and new challenges are placed before us on a daily basis.

Staff who work in the aged care industry are over stretched and always prioritizing and re prioritizing the tasks allocated during their shifts as they deal with people. Care staff working in aged care are undervalued, demonstrated in their remuneration; most of us in society would not be able to do this work, as it is physically and mentally very stressful.

Though it can be rewarding it is equally difficult dealing with residents with psychiatric illnesses and unsociable behaviors. Dealing with death and assisting family to cope with very stressful situations of placing loved ones into care and then ultimately end of life issues, takes an emotional toll.

The complaints unit which handles unresolved internal complaints within the industry would be a source to identify common issues that are brought before it.

Some identified stressors within our own facility are

1. The number of call bells and the length of time it can take to answer them.
2. Length of time it takes to take or remove residents to and from the toilet.

Without guidelines for staff per resident ratios, the facilities determine staff numbers; with limited funding, most facilities have a high proportion of their income go to staff wages, over 75% of the total income; there is no ability to provide more staff. Volunteers are utilized to assist in the daily programs for resident social activities.



An aged care facility provides care to the residents and their families and it is often because of the established relationships that evolve that families begin to appreciate the difficulties and do not formalize complaints because they are not personal and they do not wish to make things more difficult for their loves one in care, yet this does not equate to them believing there are quality outcomes.

With the accreditation system in place, one would see this as an opportunity for recognition that the system requires more funding to be able to provide manageable workloads, but this present system does not look at staffing nor makes real comparisons between operators. Each facility has to fulfill 44 outcomes; that has to be evidenced in the paper work.

What would we be able to achieve if we had appropriate funding?

- We could be providing more training for staff, this would involve being able to back fill their positions.
- We would be able to cope with ensuring our care plans are up to date, as these non-urgent tasks continually are placed on the back burner; you cannot ignore the people that are there expecting you to answer their calls of need.

Personally I also believe the staffing could be increased within high care facilities, the Department would be able to provide statistics on the number of clients that require full assistance with their daily hygiene and toileting requirements and this should be taken into account.

**b. How appropriate the current indexation formula is in recognizing the actual cost of pricing aged care services to meet the expected level and quality of such services.**

As operators we do not have any input into the indexation formula and it is difficult to obtain any information from the department to clarify this.

With the increases in costs over the past few years our increases have been we below CPI indexation. We have recently been requested to provide submissions regarding the CAP funding, without CAP funding we would be in real deficit.

Thank you for the opportunity to have some input  
Yours faithfully

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