



Senator the Hon Richard Colbeck

Assistant Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources

Liberal Senator for Tasmania

MEDIA RELEASE

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West and North West Coasters urged to contribute to aged care Royal Commission Terms of Reference

People living in West and North West Tasmania can have their say on the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission into the aged care sector through an online feedback tool.

This Royal Commission will primarily look at the quality of care provided in Residential and Home Aged Care for senior Australians, but also include young people with disabilities living in Residential Aged Care settings.

“As the Prime Minister has said, there are thousands of operators, facilities, care providers, nursing and other clinical staff, volunteers, cleaners, cooks and therapists here in West and North West Tasmania and across the nation who are out there improving the lives of senior Australians every day. This is something we should all be proud of,” Senator Colbeck said.

“However, following intensified policing and inspections of the aged sector over the past year, information has come to light through the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner, the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency and the Department of Health that makes the case for a Royal Commission into the sector compelling.”

The final terms of reference will be determined in consultation with the community, including residents and their families and aged care providers. However, it is expected the inquiry will cover:

- The quality of care provided to older Australians, and the extent of substandard care;
- The challenge of providing care to Australians with disabilities living in residential aged care, particularly younger people with disabilities;
- The challenge of supporting the increasing number of Australians suffering dementia and addressing their care needs as they age;
- The future challenges and opportunities for delivering aged care services in the context of changing demographics, including in remote, rural and regional Australia;
- Any other matters that the Royal Commission considers necessary.

Senator Colbeck said local residents could have their say on the terms of reference via the Commonwealth Department of Health’s website at consultations.health.gov.au/ or they are welcome to write to Minister Hunt or Minister Wyatt.

Consultation relating to the Terms of Reference will be open until 25 September.

We expect that all residents will be able to be engaged as the Royal Commission commences.

“Our Government’s commitment to safe, quality, compassionate, flexible and affordable aged care services for our senior Australians is absolute.

“Aged care funding has grown by \$1 billion a year since we were elected in 2013 and is at record levels. In 2017-18, alone, aged care spending is estimated to reach \$18.6 billion. Over the next five years funding will grow by \$5 billion to \$23.6 billion a year.”

Senator Colbeck said the Department of Health had closed almost one aged care service per month since Oakden, with an increasing number under sanction to improve their care.

“Incidents of older people being hurt by failures of care simply cannot be explained or excused. We must be assured about how widespread these cases are,” Senator Colbeck said.

“As a community we expect high standards for the quality and safety of aged care services and we share these expectations.

“This Royal Commission will be about proactively determining what we need to do in the future to ensure these expectations can be met.

“Evidence to date shows that the problems are not restricted to any one part of the aged care sector, whether it is for profit or not for profit, large or small facilities, regional or major metropolitan. The Royal Commission will look at the sector as a whole, without bias or prejudice. It will make findings on the evidence. “

If you or a family member have immediate concerns, please contact the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner on 1800 550 552 or you can lodge a complaint with the Commissioner online. Complaints can be made completely anonymously.

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Media Contact: Felix Ellis 0457 517 734

Authorised by Senator Richard Colbeck, 5-7 Best St, Devonport TAS 7310