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It's all about the people: older people, families, workers must be centre of aged care reform

UnitingCare Australia welcomes the release of the historic Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's final report and commends the Morrison Government's commitment to putting older Australians at the centre of reforms.

"We fully endorse the values at the heart of the Royal Commission's final report. UnitingCare Australia and our network of aged care providers are unashamedly mission driven. Over the past 100 years, our services have existed to meet a need in the community to support people as they age, and our commitment to that service has never wavered", said UnitingCare Australia National Director, Ms Claerwen Little.

"We align ourselves with the common purpose expressed by the Royal Commissioners *to ensure that older people have an entitlement to high quality aged care and support and that they must receive it.* Our vision has always been for an Australian community where older people are valued and included in community life, enabled to maintain health and independence, are able to contribute their talents and wisdom, pursue their interests, nurture relationships, maintain their culture and spirituality and be in control of their future.

"We acknowledge that everyone has a part to play and regret any instances where we have not fulfilled our commitment to deliver the highest quality of care."

Uniting Church in Australia President, Dr Deidre Palmer, said the Royal Commission provides an opportunity for the Church and its aged care services to renew our commitment to an equitable, affordable, sustainable and high-quality aged care system.

"When the Royal Commission began, the Uniting Church endorsed the Commission's focus on building a national culture of respect for ageing and older persons in Australia," said Dr Palmer.

"We declared our commitment to integrity in public life and the proclamation of truth and justice.

"We restated our mission to deliver high quality, compassionate care and our commitment to honouring the rights of every person.

"And today we express again our deep regret and apologise for the times when we have not lived these values fully.

"Our determination to address whatever issues and challenges may emerge for us in order to meet the needs of those people and communities in our care will not waver," Dr Palmer said.

"The Church and its Agencies will continue to strive to maintain open communication with residents, clients and their families and to support staff and volunteers as we begin the next phase to transform aged care in Australia.

“As we have done for the past two years, we will contribute our expertise to the discussion on the future of aged care in Australia, and work to ensure that every older person, especially the most vulnerable, knows what high-quality care looks like.

“We will work with our services, the older Australians we care for, and their families, to hold the Government to account by ensuring it creates a needs-based system that puts the person at the centre.

“In the meantime, I urge every member of our Church to show support for the national campaign, *It’s Time to Care About Aged Care*, and [sign the online petition](#).

UnitingCare Australia is a committed member of the Australian Aged Care Collaboration (AACC). The AACC represents more than 1,000 organisations who deliver 70 per cent of aged care services to 1.3 million Australians.

Looking ahead, National Director, Ms Claerwen Little said it is time to put our older loved ones at the centre of this reform.

“We stand ready to work with the Morrison Government to improve the quality and safety of the aged care system so our older people have the support they deserve. We will continue bringing forward ideas to Government for how we can transform the way in which we improve access to quality care services based on need and through targeted areas including adequate funding, technology, a well-trained and remunerated workforce, and fit-for-purpose governance and regulatory framework.

“Further, we will consider the report from the perspective of those in the community so that the legacy of this process is a truly inclusive, accessible system for every person. Each of us is entitled to have the same chance to age to our full potential, both now and into the future.

“If ever there is a time for fundamental generational change – now is that time – it is time to care about aged care”.

UnitingCare Australia is the national body for the Uniting Church’s community services network and an agency of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia. The UnitingCare network is one of the largest networks of community services in Australia, supporting 1.4 million people every year across urban, rural, and remote communities, with over 50,000 staff and 30,000 volunteers.

The UnitingCare Aged Care Network supports approximately 97,000 older people, comprising 8.5% of total residential beds and 10% of Home Care Packages nationally

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