

# Aged care needs radical overhaul

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The Federal Government must show it is serious about overhauling the shameful state of aged care by immediately committing to four central challenges: substantially lift funding, establish rigorous quality and safety standards, introduce total system transparency and improve health care.

The report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has delivered a searching analysis of aged care that makes it clear only substantial reform of the system, funding and culture will deliver humane and effective services for older Australians, the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said.

“The litany of widespread and substandard care, poor food, abuse, assaults and untrained staff --- all made possible because of ineffectual regulatory oversight and a lip service approach to standards --- demand nothing less than a change in mindset and transformational change by Government and industry.

“There will be continuing debate about how the much-needed improvements should be funded and how a new and effective instrument for oversight should be created.

“What Australia needs to see urgently from the Government is clear principles which will govern aged care quality and standards in future. These principles should be the guiding force for the financing and oversight of aged care.

**Contact:** Mark Metherell, 0429 111 986

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“CHF supports the commission’s call for a new Act that “must focus on the safety, health and wellbeing of older people and put their needs and preferences first. It should provide an entitlement to the support and care each individual needs to prevent and delay the impairment of their capacity to live independently”.

“We can’t have aged care reform without primary care reform: the need to better care for older Australians is not just about care provided by the institutions themselves.

“We welcome the commission’s recommendation for the development of a new primary care model to encourage the provision of holistic, coordinated and proactive health care for the growing complexity of the needs of people receiving aged care.

“We need to strengthen the links between residential aged care and mainstream health services by ensuring that primary care providers such as GPs and pharmacists have the right incentives to in-reach into facilities.

“For older people living at home, the system needs to provide an appropriate single health destination where they can get fully coordinated seamless health and social care.

“We welcome the commission’s recommendation for the concept of a “care finder” to help older people navigate the aged care system to find the care options and services that work for them.

“We support the recommendations for more consumer-friendly quality and safety oversight including provision for the availability of performance

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reports on every facility so that people can easily assess services," Ms Wells said.

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