



## Josephites join call for radical and lasting change to Aged Care Reform

Josephites are united in their call for profound and far-reaching reform in Aged Care. The final report for the Royal Commission into Aged Care is unequivocal in its advocacy for a human rights model, underpinned by compassion and appropriate resources for all those needing care in their later years. The devastating effects of the pandemic on aged care facilities have highlighted long acknowledged inadequacies already existing in the aged care system – the failures to provide quality and safe care for older Australians, the shift to “for profit facilities”, severe understaffing, and catastrophic underfunding by the Commonwealth Government.

“The Report of the Royal Commission is distressingly unambiguous,” said Sr Monica Cavanagh, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of St Joseph. “We’ve seen growing institutionalisation, poorly paid employees, large buildings, lack of engagement with local community. What is at the heart of the Commission’s recommendations is the call to ensure equity and a full life for all, and especially for those who are most disempowered, such as people who are seeking asylum and First Nations peoples.”

The final report of the Aged Care Commission has highlighted three major concerns. Over and over, the Report reiterates the dangerous shortage of Government funding to provide adequate staffing and wages (nursing, aged care workers, pastoral, administrative and all other forms of care), issues related to education and training, and severely inadequate out-of-home care. Elderly Australians consistently resist institutional forms of aged care, and yet, large aged care institutions continue to be built. Most importantly, the models currently in use, based on the Aged Care Act of 1997, do not have as their basis the needs of the individual or the human rights of residents.

The Sisters of St Joseph believe that four radical changes are needed:

- A permanent injection of desperately needed Government funding, both for residential and home care packages
- An exploration of new models of aged care for all, including for those living alone or in small groups (such as the Buurtzorg Aged Care System in the Netherlands)
- A new **Aged Care Act** with a focus on human rights, unambiguous transparency, and the dignity, rights and wishes of the individual
- Attention to adequate, well-trained, permanent staff in retirement homes and in ‘out-of-institution’ programs.

“We urge the Government to heed the recommendations of the Royal Commission and to support a complete revitalisation of care for the aged members of our society,” said Sr Monica. “Embracing new possibilities will lay the foundation for the kind of future we want, a future which is life-giving for all of us, based on the human and economic rights of each person. The potential is in this report to achieve such a transformation.”

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