



## ROYAL COMMISSION DIRECTIONS HEARING

The Royal Commission into Aged Care opened with a preliminary hearing on Friday 18 January in Adelaide to outline the direction the inquiry will take over the next 15 months.

At this introductory stage, no witnesses were required to appear.

All approved aged care providers were invited to make submissions detailing instances of substandard care that occurred at their facility from 2013. The top 100 providers were asked to respond by 7 January and the remaining almost 1,900 providers have been given a deadline of 8 February. The Commission acknowledged the 83 responses that have been received so far and encouraged providers to continue making their submissions.

To date, more than 300 public submissions have been received. Approximately 81% of these submissions have been about care provision. The most common concerns raised by the public relate to substandard or unsafe care and staffing issues, including staff ratios, with about 54% and 59% of submissions highlighting these issues.

The Royal Commission noted that many of the letters already received “expressly acknowledge the dedication of many thousands of those engaged in the aged care workforce and the critical role of those people in delivering high quality aged care.”<sup>i</sup>

More submissions are expected in coming months as the inquiry unfolds.

Public hearings, together with roundtables and community consultations, will be conducted throughout this year and into next year across Australia, with aged care workers, residents, families and the community. The Royal Commission is expected to visit each State and Territory capital city and regional centres throughout the country.

At the preliminary hearing, Commissioner Richard Tracey stressed,

***The Royal Commission is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to come together as a nation to consider how we can create a better system of care for elderly Australians that better aligns with the expectations of the Australian people. The hallmark of a civilised society is how it treats its most vulnerable people, and our elderly are often amongst our most physically, emotionally and financially vulnerable.”***

The Commissioners are therefore encouraging submissions from all Australians with an interest in aged care.



<sup>i</sup> Page 14 Transcript of Proceedings

<sup>ii</sup> Page 12 Transcript of Proceedings



## HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

The Royal Commission is encouraging people to make a submission using the online form that has been made available on the Commission's website but they will also accept submissions by phone, letter or email. Submissions can also be made anonymously or confidentially.

All relevant information is available on the Royal Commission website:

<https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/submissions/Pages/default.aspx>

You can:

- write to the Royal Commission at GPO Box 1151 Adelaide SA 5001.
- email [ACRGenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:ACRGenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au)
- telephone 1800 960 711 (between 8:00am-8:00pm AEDT Monday-Friday except on public holidays).

## UNLAWFUL FOR AN EMPLOYER TO TAKE ANY NEGATIVE ACTION AGAINST EMPLOYEES

Importantly for ANMF members working in aged care, the Royal Commission emphasised that it is unlawful for an employer to take punitive action against an employee or ex-employee who provides evidence or a submission to the Royal Commission.

If you have any concerns about this or a related issue, please contact your ANMF branch for support immediately.

## UPCOMING HEARINGS

The Royal Commission's first substantive hearings are scheduled to commence on 11 February in Adelaide, continuing into the week of 18 February.

## ANMF SUBMISSION

The ANMF is currently preparing its submission to the Royal Commission.

Members will receive further information from us in the coming weeks on how they can get involved.