

**Productivity Commission
Caring For Older Australians**

My name is Shannon Murphy & having worked in the Aged Care industry for the last 12yrs I feel I can offer some insight into the problems in the Aged Care industry as conveyed to me by residents' relatives & staff. My main concerns are with the provision of care within Residential Aged Care Facilities, which I will outline.

BUILDINGS

Most R.A.C.F are not designed to meet resident needs but built to meet budget requirements & a need to house as many residents as possible into the space provided. There appears to be no building codes/standards applicable to the construction of an R.A.C.F

E.g. Dementia units with uneven outside areas causing falls

No outside areas for residents with dementia to wander or sit

Rooms too small to accommodate equipment needed to provide safe care

Inappropriate floor coverings

Poorly designed nurses stations/pan rooms

Inadequate hand washing facilities/availability of gloves & other P.P.E.s

ACTIVITIES

Most people will agree that active meaningful activities are essential to

EVERYBODY but this seems to go unrecognised in aged care as getting resources designed to meet the needs/abilities of people with dementia are met with "we don't have the money"

This attitude makes staff use their own time and money to provide this necessary service to residents a situation I find unacceptable.

TRAINING

The current courses in aged care seem not to meet the needs of the industry, comments I have heard from new staff have confirmed this for me:-

A new staff member asked to attend a resident who had been incontinent stated

"I am not doing that"

Then another new staff member upon being informed of a resident passing stated

"I can't deal with that, does it happen often"

These comments from people that had completed cert 3 in aged care.

I believe that training for aged care is inadequate especially in the area of dementia and needs to contain more in the areas of:

Communication with people with dementia

Providing activities for people with dementia

Dealing with challenging behaviours.

PLACEMENT

There are many people in nursing homes with disabilities who should not be there, once

placed in a nursing home they loose all support from community support groups who state that they are no longer in the community & therefore not eligible for their services. Also the placement of people in secure units based on a G.P or A.CAT. Assessment seems inadequate other citizens have to be committed through the courts or mental health act to have their freedom removed but in aged care a single G.P. with limited knowledge of dementia or an A.C.A.T. team who wants the person placed in accommodation can make these decisions appears unfair considering that the person has no recourse to dispute this decision.

CONCLUSION

There are many more issues I could bring to your attention but due to limited time (this inquiry was not well known within the aged care industry or those that work in it) One other is the poor wages paid to staff which only goes to under value staff in the field & doesn't attract new/young people to engage in an carreer in aged care. There is also the issuse of staffing levels with no leagly enforceable staffing ratio based on care needs and skills mix can only lead to the reduction in quality of care within R.A.C.F

Yours Sincerely

Shannon Murphy