

Inquiry into Caring for Older Australians
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428 Canberra City ACT 2601

agedcare@pc.gov.au

22nd of July, 2010

Dear Commissioner,

Residential Aged Care is a unique industry with its own set of challenges and priorities. It is a melting pot which combines clinical, care, hotel, and other specialised services which all need to be prepared and served within strict rules and regulations. Unfortunately the prevailing conditions and the overarching government policies do not support best practice and would certainly evolve in less than sustainable workforce and services.

The reasons for my concerns are the following:

1) The Federal government keeps adopting a punitive approach encouraging the Residential Aged Care Industry (RACI) to focus on risk management and damage control reactions.

Recommendation: The government needs instead to push for the RACI to achieve and report Quality Outcomes/ indicators. In other words, adopt a policy that promotes the achievement of positive goals rather than avoidance of negative outcomes.

2) The Federal Government does not recognise innovation. Obtaining the required funding and achieving compliance with the accreditation requirements require restrictive activities.

Recommendation: The government needs to reward and accommodate innovation specifically in the areas of compliance and staffing approaches.

3) There are no regulations or controls on who can manage a RAC facility. This has led to negative implications on the residents, staff, service providers and the facility managers themselves.

Recommendations: There need to be some form of credentialing and the necessity to pass a RAC management courses as a requirement to apply and hold RAC facility manager's post.

4) There is minimal attention by tertiary organisations for RAC as a specialty. While we see Maternity, Child and Mental health as dedicated unit, Aged care is usually forgotten or attached to other units such as chronic health.

Recommendation: The establishment and promotion of Aged care as a specialty with its own rights. This would raise the specialty's profile and would attract the young generation.

In summary, the above concerns reflect the opinion of the author based on 16 years of work in the RAC industry, 14 of them as a RAC facility manager, as well as a Doctoral study in staffing in residential aged care.

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