

**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 March 2011 11:25 AM

**Subject:** Comments on Report - Caring for Older Australians

(1) I understand why the cost of aged care is the main criterion underpinning the recommendations. But I don't understand the rationale for removing the distinction between residential high care and low care.

Those who wish to move into residential low care make a voluntary, conscious decision to avail themselves of the facilities and personal type services that are available. It is usually difficult to arrange the same level of services if they remained in their own home. Therefore, this usually requires sale of their home to move into residential low care. I emphasise that this is a voluntary decision that they make and are comfortable with.

Those who enter residential high care do so because they are involuntary recipients of a seriously illness. It is akin to being hospitalised in a high care facility in order to obtain nursing type services because they are unable to fend for themselves. It would be difficult or impossible to care for such patients in their own home so there is little chose but to admit them into a high care facility. Usually others make the decision for the patient to move into high-level care.

(2) The recommendations should treat all aged people in our community in a fair and equitable way. If those in high-level care are required to sell their home or draw on this asset then it will discriminate against them solely on the basis that they are involuntary recipients of a serious illness. For example, Centrelink excludes a pensioners home for those that a lucky enough to enjoy reasonable health and are able to live in their own home until they pass away.

Most pensioners have scrimped and saved all their life to own their home. If the Commission proceeds with its recommendation that assets in a home should be taken into consideration then a threshold should be set, say \$500,000, before amounts above this are taken into consideration. I believe this is roughly the current median value of a home and it will not encourage asset stripping amongst those of modest wealth as they approach old age. My concern is that the incentive to own a home be not removed for those on low/modest incomes.

(3) My personal preference is an increase in the Medicare levy to cover the costs of those who may need to enter residential care.

(4) I hope the final recommendations will retain the provision to grandfather current users of care services.

F Ziolkowski