



HEARINGS HAVE COMMENCED

Following the initial Directions Hearing, 18 January, the Royal Commission introductory hearings commenced on 11 February 2019 in Adelaide. The focus of this first round of hearings is for the Commission to gain a broad understanding of the aged care sector and the issues that will need to be addressed as it progresses. Counsel Assisting the Commission stated that to do this evidence would be led from witnesses on behalf of some of the principal representative organisations that have deep interest and involvement in the aged care system.

The first day of hearings comprised an opening address from Counsel Assisting the Commission who outlined how the hearings would proceed and the sort of evidence that will be given, and consumers' stories. The first witnesses were members of Bob Sprigg's family. They gave an account of the loss of their loved one due to the failings at Oakden.

Representatives of COTA, National Seniors Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian College of Nursing were among those who gave evidence in the first week. Geriatrician Associate Professor Edward Strivens, provided an overview of the many clinical issues that concern elderly residents and consumers of aged care. He emphasised the importance of an interdisciplinary approach and the critical need for the individual to be at the centre of care.

ANMF APPEARANCE - WHY RATIOS ARE CRUCIAL

On Wednesday 13 February 2019, Federal Secretary, Annie Butler appeared before the Royal Commission. For more than two hours in the witness box, Ms Butler answered questions about the industry and had the opportunity to explain why the ANMF says mandated minimum staffing levels and skills mix are an essential part of any solution. The evidence included a distressing account of missed care as described in a recent member survey.

RATIOS WILL BE COST NEUTRAL

Ms Butler's evidence explained that the research the ANMF commissioned, the only work of its kind in the country, is academically rigorous and defensible research, which establishes a benchmark for the minimum staffing levels and skills mix required to ensure safe care for every elderly resident. She was then able to complete the picture by outlining the economic analysis, also commissioned by the ANMF which shows that the introduction of the research's recommended staffing levels and skills mix over time will not only be cost neutral but will also bring invaluable benefit to the lives of elderly people in residential aged care.



*ANMF Federal Secretary
Annie Butler*

FUTURE HEARINGS

The second week of hearing runs from 18-22 February, where evidence from expert clinical groups, aged care providers and other peak bodies, including the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will proceed. Future hearings will address specific topics raised in the Royal Commission's terms of reference and will take place at different locations across the country.

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE A SUBMISSION?

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

<https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/>

You can also contact the ANMF confidentially at anmffederal@anmf.org.au for urgent issues in relation to the Royal Commission. If you feel pressured not to tell your own story to the Commission, it is imperative that you contact your union branch for advice:

<http://anmf.org.au/pages/anmf-branches>