

**This statement of principles was developed at a workshop of the Social Policy Committee in March 2021.**

The principles that will drive our analysis of proposals in this area are:

- The rights of aged care users and workers must become central to the aged care system. These rights must be grounded in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and include:
  - The right to be treated with respect
  - The right to participate in decisions about care
  - The right to personal safety
  - The right to access to appropriate medical services and care
  - The right to fair remuneration and safe working conditions

These rights must be available without discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion or any other personal characteristics; and where appropriate special protections should be made to ensure that the rights of minority groups are respected.

- The Aged Care Act must be rewritten to elevate the rights of users as central to the operation of the Aged Care System. The Act must be based on a universal right to high quality, safe and timely support and care to assist older people to live an active, self-determined and meaningful life, and ensure older people receive high quality care (RC<sup>i</sup> Rec 1).
  - Aged care standards should be urgently reviewed. (RC Rec 19, 20)
  - The revised standards should be regulated by the Department of Health, and overseen by an independent authority that has the power to enforce standards. (RC Rec 10; 103) and supported by a transparent ratings system (RC Rec 24).
  - An Inspector-General of Aged Care should be appointed to investigate systemic issues and complaints in relation to the Aged Care system (RC Rec 12)
- Measures to combat ageism in the community and the economy must be enhanced (RC Rec 26).
- Aged Care should be delivered in a single holistic system that meets the needs of older Australians as they age (RC Recs 4; 25):

The National Foundation for Australian Women is dedicated to promoting and protecting the interests of Australian women, including intellectual, cultural, political, social, economic, legal, industrial and domestic spheres, and ensuring that the aims and ideals of the women's movement and its collective wisdom are handed on to new generations of women. NFAW is a feminist organisation, independent of party politics and working in partnership with other women's organisations.

This release has been authorised by the National Foundation for Australian Women, Canberra: President Ms Jane Madden.

- The distinction between CHSP and Home Care Packages needs to be addressed, with users transitioning between levels of support without barriers (RC Recs 28, 31).
  - Case management systems need to be developed to monitor and support aged care users as their needs change. Active case management systems should replace the use of the ACAT to transition between programs (RC Rec 30).
  - Active case management should also be available to ensure that users are accessing the appropriate level, and form, of support, replacing the allocation of “Home Care Packages.
  - Allied health services must be funded and made available to residents of residential aged care (RC Recs 36, 38).
  - Regional services must be funded to facilitate aging in place: at home or in residential care facilities that are linked to local communities (RC Rec. 55).
- The working conditions for Aged Care workers must be improved. This would include:
    - Increasing the number of workers required to be on duty in Aged Care Residential facilities. In particular the number of registered nurses must be regulated (RC Rec 86).
    - Training packages must be developed to ensure that workers are properly trained in appropriate skills (RC Rec 30; 81; 114).
    - The remuneration of workers must be reviewed to ensure that they are being paid at a rate that is commensurate with their duties and qualifications (RC Rec 84; 85).
    - Aged care workers who are working in the home care system must be remunerated for travel time. Minimum shifts must also be specified in the award and individual contracts.
    - Providers of home care services must be required to implement systems to monitor the safety of workers including check-in/check-out systems. This obligation should be extended to those internet based platforms used by independent contractors (gig workers) to offer aged care and personal services.
    - The current exemption from superannuation guarantee obligations payable on behalf of a person providing domestic services for fewer than 30 hours a week must be reduced to 10 hour pw.
- Funding must be allocated according to need, not rationed. All older Australians must be able to access the appropriate level of aged care service (RC Rec 41).
- The funding model for providers of Aged Care, particularly Residential Aged Care, should reflect the actual cost of providing that care. Funding provided for care must be “ringfenced” to ensure that it is spent on the provision of care, and is not diverted to the profits of the provider.
- We recognise that this will require substantial additional investment in Aged Care. Currently Australia’s investment in Aged Care is about half of the OECD average. This must be funded by the Federal Government, primarily through general revenue:
    - Investment in aged care must be prioritised over tax cuts;

- The Commonwealth should be responsible for providing sufficient funding to ensure that appropriate accommodation standards are met, removing the necessity for accommodation deposits (RC Rec 142).
- Aged care, whether in-home or residential, must be universally available. Co-contributions must be means tested in accordance with the “ability to pay” principle. It is appropriate to expect all users of residential aged care to pay a base daily rate (RC Rec 127).
- Anomalies between the means tests applied to aged care and the means test applied to the age pension must be addressed by reference to the “ability to pay” principle.

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<sup>i</sup> RC Rec: Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report: Recommendation