

Monday 17 September, 2018

Ratios, reversal of funding cuts key to aged care fix

The Morrison Government must immediately reverse its funding cuts to the aged care sector and protect residents and workers by implementing minimum staffing ratios for aged care facilities.

Yesterday Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a Royal Commission into aged care to deflect damaging revelations about the sector being aired by ABC's *4 Corners* tonight.

As treasurer, Scott Morrison cut \$1.2 billion in funding from the sector by slashing the Aged Care Funding Instrument in his 2016 budget. This funding must be restored, and the restored funding must be earmarked for resident care and linked to minimum staffing levels.

Parliament must ensure minimum staffing ratios, appropriate qualifications and training, and compensation that reflects the value of the work that aged care staff perform.

People working in the sector must also be allowed to negotiate multiple-enterprise agreements, so they can get fair pay for their valuable work, and to prevent operators undercutting one another on staffing costs.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"Everyone in Australia deserves dignity, comfort and enjoyment in old age, receiving high-quality care. And the increasing number of people employed in this fast-growing sector deserve to work safely and be compensated justly for the valuable work they perform."

"But because of the Morrison Government's cuts to the sector and the greed of for-profit aged care providers, many people are being appallingly mistreated in our aged care sector, and the work of people in aged care is systematically under-valued.

"Scott Morrison thinks that after cutting more than \$1 billion from the sector, he can call an inquiry and avoid taking action on aged care for the next few years. He is wrong.

"There are changes Morrison must make now – today. He must restore the funding he has taken from aged care, and make sure it is linked to minimum staffing ratios required for the provision of quality care.

"He must set statutory staffing ratios with a definite and reasonable timeline to make sure that a high quality of care is delivered to those relying on the sector.

"And he must ensure that people caring for elderly Australians are paid fairly and that their work is appropriately valued."

ENDS

Media contact: ACTU Media 03 9664 7315, or Lachlan Williams 0447 682 027

<http://www.actu.org.au/actu-media/media-releases>