



Media Release

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ACSA calls for end to aged care blame

Australia's peak body for not-for-profit aged and community care providers has called for an end to the naming, blaming and shaming of aged care facilities.

Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) CEO Greg Mundy said the latest round of horror stories concerning aged care facilities serve only to fuel anxiety and generate headlines.

"No elderly person in a nursing home, or anywhere else, should suffer any form of neglect," Mr Mundy said. "Any instances of improper care or treatment should be immediately brought to the attention of nursing home operators by family, friends or staff. Serious issues can also be reported to the Department of Health and Ageing.

"Far too often the media is the first recourse for those concerned about conditions in nursing homes. The media is right to be concerned but they fail in their responsibility to present the complete story.

"Aged care is one of the most heavily regulated industries in the country. Regulation is essential but the burden of onerous compliance procedures and inadequate funding does little to improve the care of elderly people.

"If the media, and the public, are seriously interested in aged care, where are the follow up reports to the alleged instances of poor care? Where are the stories on how the Government intends to address the serious and complex issues facing service delivery as the percentage of older Australians escalates? Where is the outrage about the lack of planning for the future?

"ACSA and other aged care organisations, including consumer groups, have long been advocating for aged care issues to be taken seriously by the government, the public and the media.

"The Government has taken significant steps to redress these issues through the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission and a planned Productivity Commission inquiry into aged care among other initiatives.

"However, the public and media focus continues to centre on peripheral issues including the plight of ageing Baby Boomers, shocking stories on isolated incidents in nursing homes, and why it's wrong to sell the family home to pay for aged care accommodation.

"Getting old is a fact of life. Serious health issues for frail elderly people are a fact of life. Poor treatment of elderly Australians should never be a fact of life, nor should the lack of facilities and services for older people.

"The Prime Minister has said repeatedly the "blame game" serves no purpose. Let's end the blame game in aged care. We owe it to older Australians and future generations of older people to do the right thing and make aged care work."

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