

Media Release

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End the blame game in aged care - ACSA

Australia's aged care system has again come under attack because the media has chosen to highlight several serious incidents in aged care facilities.

Aged and Community Services Australia CEO Greg Mundy said emotive reporting of this nature serves only to distress residents, caring staff and the wider community.

ACSA represents more than 1,100 church, charitable and community based organisations providing accommodation and care services to more than 700,000 older Australians, people with a disability and their carers. There are 2,830 aged care homes in Australia catering for the needs of older Australians.

"In one of the most highly regulated industries in the country, one which cares for some of our most vulnerable citizens, there will of course be issues of concern and indeed complaints. It is only right that residents and their families are able to raise concerns about their care," Mr Mundy said.

"However, the complaints system which is tied in with accreditation standards for these facilities is fundamentally flawed. It is a punitive system which fails to properly address issues and in no way encourages a nurturing, caring environment.

"Out of almost 3,000 facilities there are only 14 which have sanctions imposed. The statistics relating to complaints are higher but do not detail the extensive range of issues which qualify as a complaint that must be investigated.

"Calls for nursing home providers who have had complaints registered to be "named and shamed" creates an intolerable environment that can only do more harm to an industry struggling under the burden of grossly inadequate funding and lack of recognition by the government.

"An independent complaints authority and arbitration must be established to improve access, transparency and the ability to properly manage issues arising in aged care.

"Our sympathies are with the families, providers and staff involved in a system which doesn't support them to care for residents. A senate inquiry and industry demands have been unable to prompt the Government into action – sadly these stories might be the trigger. Aged care should be part of the Government's vision for Australia's future – it is not.

"We need to join forces now to make the system work. The Prime Minister called for an end to the blame game in politics – let's end the blame game in aged care."

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