

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE QUALITY AND SAFETY

In September 2018, the federal government announced a Royal Commission into the aged care sector. The announcement came ahead of a damning two-part Four Corners investigation into elder neglect and poor conditions in aged care, as well as years of campaigning by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) to fix systemic issues preventing nursing and care staff from delivering safe best practice care.

WHAT IS A ROYAL COMMISSION?

A Royal Commission is a special investigation into important matters of public concern. It is the highest form of inquiry in Australia.

A Royal Commission can take evidence in a number of ways, including formal open and closed hearings. A Royal Commission also has broad powers to gather information, including summoning witnesses to give evidence or produce documents.

WHAT WILL THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE INVESTIGATE?

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety will focus on residential aged care, home care and dementia care, as well as the care provided to young people with disabilities who live in residential aged care facilities.

The issues the Royal Commission has been instructed to investigate are broad, and include the quality of aged care services, how best to deliver these services (including workforce investment) and systems to ensure high quality care is delivered.

Visit <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/Pages/Terms-of-reference.aspx> to read the full terms of reference. The Royal Commission website at <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/> also has information on how to make a submission and you can join the mailing list for updates.



WHO MAY BE ASKED TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE/APPEAR BEFORE A HEARING?

Any person the Royal Commission considers necessary to the investigation can be required to provide evidence or appear before an open or closed hearing. This may include aged care providers and management, government officials, residents and family members, nurses and carers, and other key stakeholders (such as union officials).

Any ANMF members required to appear before the Royal Commission or provide evidence should contact the ANMF immediately so we can provide expert assistance.

HOW LONG WILL THE ROYAL COMMISSION LAST?

The federal government has instructed the Royal Commission to provide an interim report by **31 October 2019**, with its final report and recommendations due by **30 April 2020**.

However, timelines for Royal Commissions can be extended. If the government or the Royal Commissioners believe more time is needed to properly investigate the issues, the Royal Commission could be extended beyond April 2020.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE ROYAL COMMISSION CONCLUDES?

The Royal Commission's final report will contain a number of recommendations to address the various issues identified throughout the investigation.

However, these recommendations are just that - recommendations. The federal government is under no obligation to enact these through legislation. Similarly, the government can choose which recommendations (if any) to implement.

DO WE NEED TO WAIT FOR THE ROYAL COMMISSION TO CONCLUDE TO TAKE ACTION?

No! Nurses and carers already know why the aged care system is broken and we are already campaigning for change. The ANMF will be making a comprehensive submission to the Royal Commission drawing on our experience and the many previous submissions we have made to aged care investigations.

We can't wait for the outcome of a Royal Commission before we start to fix aged care. We know action needs to be taken now to achieve more staff for aged care and legislated staffing ratios.

If you would like to get involved and find out more about our campaign for ratios in aged care visit <http://timeforruby.anmf.org.au> or <https://www.facebook.com/morestaffforagedcare>.

If in doubt about the purpose, role or powers of the Royal Commission, please contact the ANMF for further information. For contact details of the ANMF Federal Offices and Branches visit <http://anmf.org.au/pages/contact-anmf>



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