

Final report and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

A statement from Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen

Mercy Health welcomes the recommendations of the final report of the Royal Commission report into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Mercy Health will continue to work with Government and our sector, and most importantly with our residents, clients and staff, to create an aged care system that is trusted by the community and makes all Australians proud.

The final report of the Royal Commission, titled *Care, Dignity and Respect*, invites the aged care sector to participate in a more hopeful, compassionate and caring reinvention of the aged care system. Even before the Royal Commission was announced in October 2018, Mercy Health acknowledged publicly that this inquiry and the resulting reform presents us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change the way society funds, regulates and thinks about ageing and aged care. While more funding is essential, the Royal Commission has also challenged us to consider how we regard and respect older people as a society.

As an organisation based on compassionate care, Mercy Health acknowledges the personal stories of pain, hurt and disappointment that older Australians and their families shared throughout the course of the Royal Commission. We should never forget that the preceding interim report of the Royal Commission was titled *Neglect*. As a society and sector, having heard those voices it is now our responsibility to dignify their stories by committing to real and effective reform. Like others, Mercy Health is not above reproach or without blame from failings in aged care.

We must waste no time in commencing the important work of responding to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. We must prioritise any recommendations that can be implemented rapidly, while applying ourselves to delivering an effective response to the balance of the recommended changes.

Mercy Health is also committed to continuing to implement the changes that we have underway and planned, many of which were delayed or interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes, some of which have been specifically referenced by the Royal Commission as key issues in system reform, include caring for the elderly in a way that upholds and protects their human rights.

In the words of the Founder of the Sisters of Mercy, Catherine McAuley, we must “resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow”. The Royal Commission final report

reminds us of our failure to care for and respect older Australians. It outlines the actions we must take to improve the way we care *today* and how we can strive to do better *tomorrow*. This is a call for all of us: providers, Government and Australian citizens alike.

Over the coming weeks, Mercy Health will review in greater detail the full report of the Royal Commission. We will outline our call to action, stating what we intend to do with regard to the recommendations within our remit to change. We hope and expect that the Government and all Australians will do likewise, outlining the practical steps each can take to ensure our elderly citizens receive the respect, care, love and compassion they deserve.

Mercy Health will continue to communicate regularly and publicly with residents, clients and their families on our call to action and our progress to responding to all of the recommendations of the Royal Commission, which can be viewed [here](#).

Adj Prof Stephen Cornelissen

Mercy Health Group Chief Executive Officer

Mercy Health is a Catholic health organisation grounded in a 2,000-year tradition of caring for others. We are guided by the values of compassion, hospitality, respect, innovation, stewardship and teamwork.

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