

Media Release

1 November 2019

VMCH response – Royal Commission Interim Report

With the release of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety Interim Report, VMCH continues to be concerned at the Government's lack of commitment to funding the residential aged care and at-home aged care sector.

CEO Sonya Smart said she strongly supports enhancing the process for older Australians to access suitable services to help them live safely and comfortably in their home of choice and live their best life in residential aged care.

"The stories emerging from the Royal Commission are both heartbreaking and confronting for the community and those working in aged care," said Sonya.

"As an organisation, we are concerned by the reports and are consistently reviewing our services and processes, to ensure we are providing the best possible care and support for our residents and clients.

"As the proportion of older Australians grow, there will be increasing pressure on these systems to meet the demand for services, particularly in Victoria. This is increasingly true for those requiring support via a Home Care Package, however we are all too aware that there are not enough of the appropriate package levels for clients. Added to this, the waitlists are unacceptable.

"This is something that we, as an organisation are unable to fix. The Commonwealth Government spent \$5.1 billion on Home Care Support, which is not enough.

"There are almost 100,000 Australians receiving Home Care Packages, according to the Government's Home Care Packages Data Report (4th Quarter 2018-19).

"Despite a large release of new packages, there are still 119,524 people on the national queue awaiting a Home Care Package at the appropriate level. This is unacceptable, and more needs to be done to allow service providers such as VMCH to assist our older generation to live at home, for longer.

"We will continue to advocate to influence policy for an increased focus on improving services as an industry."

Sonya said there while there are challenges around the provision of services which are reliant on Government funding, VMCH is continually working on improving the quality of life for those living in residential aged care.

"I am proud of the work we are doing in several areas to improve outcomes. Underpinned by our Montessori practice, we are significantly changing the experience of those who have previously relied on psychotropic medication to reduce the need for medication.

"We are also working to reduce the number of young people in aged care residences, with our Austin Street service, Victoria's first purpose-built residence for young people with an Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)."

Sonya said the coverage of consumer stories of the inadequate and disturbing treatment of people by Aged Care staff has been disheartening.

"For those of us working in the sector, this is confronting and does little to engender a sense of pride in our work.

"However, I know of the many wonderful staff at VMCH who dedicate their lives to ensuring the people in their care are treated with dignity and respect and will continue to do so."

Media enquiries

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About VMCH

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic not for profit organisation, compassion, respect and inclusion aren't just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we've been around for over a century, we're always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.

