

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 17 March 2021

AGED CARE ROYAL COMMISSION A FAILURE FOR WOUND CARE

Wounds Australia, the peak body for chronic wound prevention and management, says the Royal Commission into Aged Care has been an “almost complete failure” for older Australians suffering from chronic wounds.

They have also warned the Commission’s few recommendations on chronic wounds threaten to shift the costs of treatment from the Federal Government to the States, while huge holes are left in the training of doctors, nurses and other clinicians.

Wounds Australia Chair Hayley Ryan said it was “inconceivable wounds were barely mentioned in the Royal Commission’s Report”, with just four of 148 Recommendations mentioning wound care.

“Over 420,000 Australians suffer from chronic wounds each year. The vast majority are over 65 and likely to be in the aged care system. Chronic wounds cost the national aged and healthcare budgets around \$3 billion annually,” Hayley Ryan said.

“The Report shows the Commissioners and governments are clueless on chronic wounds.

“Recommending aged care patients receive wound care from hospital-based teams burdens a system already at capacity, while the vast majority of wound experts work outside it.

“And ‘considering’ the inclusion of specialist wound care subjects in Certificates III and IV in Aged Care isn’t good enough. They must be part of the curriculum.

“Wound care units must also be part of university courses, including for doctors’ and nurses’ degrees. Governments should also support programs to train aged care workers to stop pressure injuries from developing in the first place.”

Hayley Ryan said the strong focus on improving mental health in the Royal Commission’s Report demanded a large investment in wound care because of the well-established direct link between chronic wounds and poor mental health.

“With Royal Commission deadlines for enhanced aged care systems as little as three months away, Wounds Australia should be used as the primary resource for the Government. After all, we are the country’s single best source of knowledge and patient treatment,” Hayley Ryan said.

“Wounds Australia has thousands of members who treat wounds and educate other healthcare specialists. We have the expertise to deliver solutions that reduce costs, are effective and can be implemented quickly,” Hayley Ryan said.

ENDS

PLEASE NOTE – A long version Media Release contains comments on specific recommendations.

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