

Aged care reforms required in May budget, not just dollars

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‘Every older person should be able to live well, with dignity and independence, as part of their community and in a place of their choosing,’ says Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) Chief Executive Adj Prof Alison Verhoeven.

‘Regrettably, as the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has shown, we are far from this perfectly reasonable ideal in Australia today.’

In a perspective brief, [Translating aged care reform recommendations to action](#), published today by the AHHA’s Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research, the May 2021 Commonwealth budget is highlighted as an opportunity to start the shift from a market-oriented approach to aged care to the human rights approach advocated by the Royal Commission.

‘The Australian Government has a responsibility to all Australians to ensure the findings of the Royal Commission are translated to actions – and this must happen with urgency,’ says Adj Prof Verhoeven.

‘The safety and wellbeing of older Australians depends on positive decision-making now; we cannot continue to perpetuate 20 years of policy failure any longer.’

The perspective brief notes that successive government policy has enabled commercialisation within aged care based upon a market economy philosophy. People who use aged care have become ‘consumers’ who ‘direct’ their own care by purchasing services from businesses in a ‘competitive market’, but this market has limited transparency and has demonstrated little improvement in quality.

The authors call on the Australian Government to take action to reform the aged care sector beyond its immediate response in March 2021 of \$452 million for oversight, financial help for struggling aged care residential businesses, and increasing the aged care workforce.

‘The AHHA has published a detailed [position statement](#) on the reforms required to translate the Royal Commission’s recommendations into action. Governance and regulation, funding and pricing, clinical care and workforce reforms are amongst the recommendations put forward in this perspective brief as priorities for action. We need to look beyond simply adding more money and focus on systemic reform now to ensure government support benefits older people needing care,’ says Adj Prof Verhoeven.

Translating aged care reform recommendations into action is available [online](#). More information on AHHA and the Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research is available at [ahha.asn.au](#). This media release is available [online](#).

The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the national peak body for public and not-for-profit hospitals, Primary Health Networks, and community and primary healthcare services.