



## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

### **Geriatricians support Royal Commission's recommendation to provide outreach services for residents of aged care homes**

2 March 2021

According to the Australian and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine (ANZSGM), one of the most important outcomes of the final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety is the acknowledgment that older people in aged care homes have complex health problems that are best managed by multidisciplinary health services. The report accurately describes the current state of multidisciplinary outreach services as *"patchy, haphazard, and subject to local funding restrictions."*

*"It is clear that the Royal Commission understands that older people in aged care homes require expert medical, nursing and allied health care,"* says ANZSGM President Dr John Maddison.

*"It is vital that better systems to meet the complex medical needs of older people in aged care are implemented. Geriatricians have significant expertise in the core themes raised in the report such as dementia care, medication use and the minimisation of chemical restraints such as antipsychotics."*

*"The key to reducing antipsychotic use is having systems in place to allow expert multidisciplinary teams to work with the patient, their family, GP and aged care staff to find better individualised solutions."*

ANZSGM strongly supports the Royal Commission's proposed plan (Recommendation 58) for state and territory governments to agree upon the introduction and funding of local hospital network-led outreach health services for residents of aged care homes. This model would enhance coordination and ensure a wider range of health services to improve the quality of life for older people. It would also provide a strong platform for improving the significant deficits in aged care research recognised by the report. With adequate resources, geriatricians are ideally placed to provide significant leadership of Recommendation 58.

*"There is enormous value in outreach teams run by geriatricians and other health professionals with expertise in the management of an older person's complex medical issues, operating through state run health services; this needs to become a standard model of care within all local health districts,"* says Dr Maddison.

Access to multidisciplinary outreach teams will be critical in achieving desired improvements with regard to primary care, dementia care, medication management and management of antipsychotics. These teams will also be the mechanism through which improved transition between hospital and aged care is achieved.

*“There are examples across the country of well-developed outreach team models that are running successfully and effectively, they must be provided with sustainable funding through the National Health Reform Agreement and they must continue to be developed.”* added Dr Maddison.

Older people enter aged care homes for medical reasons, but the care they receive does not always meet their medical needs. The Royal Commission’s examination of aged care in Australia has clearly understood this fact, exposing a system that requires extensive reform.

**-ENDS-**

#### Further Information

The link below demonstrates how local health district-led outreach teams operate:

- Aged Care Rapid Response Team, Royal North Shore Hospital  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5kBA3-SobM>

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#### About the Australian and New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine (ANZSGM)

The ANZSGM represents geriatricians and medical professionals who strive to provide the best possible health care and support for older people, working to improve their quality of life and well-being.

The Society has over 1,000 members in Australia and New Zealand who work across all healthcare settings and are experts in managing the complex medical and related problems faced by older people.

We treat many conditions common to older people, and through professional assessment and tailored intervention support older people to maintain their independence and remain at home.

We contribute to maintaining a specialised skilled workforce to meet the future needs and challenges of a rapidly ageing population. We advocate for improvements to policy and social attitudes to recognise older people as valued members of our society. To find out more visit: <http://www.anzsgm.org/>