



RECENT HEARINGS

The Aged Care Royal Commission continues to hold hearings across the country gathering extensive evidence into all aspects of aged care. The Commission has held four hearings since August. In Brisbane, the Commission examined regulation of quality and safety and how it can be improved. In Melbourne, the Commission held hearings dealing with the experiences of younger people in residential aged care and the challenges of providing services to people from diverse backgrounds. The ANMF provided submissions to each of these hearings which can be found here:

- <http://bit.ly/anmf-sub-rc-regulation>
- <http://bit.ly/anmf-sub-rc-youngerpeople>
- <http://bit.ly/anmf-sub-rc-diversity>

Sadly, in the days before the most recent hearing in Melbourne, we learned Commissioner Richard Tracey had passed away. The hearing to examine the problems facing the aged care workforce, commenced with an acknowledgement of the work and contributions Commissioner Tracey has made to both the Royal Commission and in his legal career.

The Royal Commission now comprises Ms Lynelle Briggs AO and the Honourable Tony Pagone QC, a former justice of both the Federal Court and the Victorian Supreme Court.

MELBOURNE HEARING 3: THE AGED CARE WORKFORCE

The aged care workforce hearing ran from 14-18 October and provided Commissioners with the opportunity to hear from staff in aged care, industry providers, government representatives, academics and union officials. The ANMF was represented by Rob Bonner in his capacity as Director Operations and Strategy of ANMF SA and Acting Chair of the Aged Services Industry Reference Committee and ANMF Victorian Branch Assistant Secretary, Paul Gilbert.

Mr Bonner sat on a panel of experts in relation to VET training and qualifications for working in aged care. The panel explained that one of the problems with current Cert III courses is that graduates are not always job-ready for the aged care sector.

In addition, Mr Bonner explained that we need to make our qualifications easier to navigate and easier to progress, and we need co-investment and co-responsibility between industry, students and training providers to get there.

Paul Gilbert appeared on a panel speaking about the industrial relations challenges of working in aged care. All witnesses spoke of the disillusionment of low pay and excessive workload, the difficulties of bargaining in the sector and the vulnerability of many in the workforce due to insecure work.

Mr Gilbert pointed out that one of the problems was the lack of transparency in wage negotiations and that funding is not linked to wage outcomes. He cautioned against more reviews - saying 'it's time things were put in place, and we know what needs to be put in place'. Mr Gilbert outlined his vision for the aged care workforce - that it be 'well paid, proud and that the community has confidence and trust in it'.

Mr Bonner gave evidence a second time - outlining the ANMF's research commissioned to develop a staffing and skills mix methodology. In Counsel Assisting's closing address this model was described as sophisticated and one that **cannot** be fairly described as a blunt instrument.

TIME FOR SOLUTIONS

Counsel Assisting concluded by saying it is time to start focussing on solutions in the following areas: methods for determining appropriate staffing-levels and skills mix, ideas for transforming aged care training and education, a registration scheme for personal care workers, options to resolve low remuneration and poor working-conditions, governance, leadership and workforce culture.

The ANMF's aged care workforce submission can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/anmf-sub-rc-workforce>

Next month, hearings will take place in Mudgee between 4-6 November and in Hobart 11-15 November 2019.