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## Aged Care Royal Commission report released, makes 148 recommendations to improve sector

The two-year-long Royal Commission into aged care has released its report, which includes almost 150 recommendations to improve the ailing sector.

Positive elements have emerged from the report – including the recommendations for increased training and professional development for the workforce, improved wages and labour standards for aged care workers, and more rigorous overall governance of the sector.

Unions and the ACTU are disappointed with the Morrison Government's lack of announcement today on a comprehensive plan for the implementation of these recommendations. The union movement urges the Morrison Government to act on these recommendations urgently, for the sake of aged care workers and the people in their care.

Unions representing aged care workers and the ACTU had called for the implementation of four key measures in their comprehensive plan to fix the systemic issues in the aged care sector, which are:

- Mandated minimum staffing levels and required mix of skills and qualifications in every residential facility, over every shift.
- Transparency and accountability for Government funding.
- Mandated training requirements (including infection control and ongoing professional development) accessible to all staff and paid by employer.
- Government funding is required to be increased, linked to the provision of care and the direct employment of permanent staff with decent pay and enough hours to live on.

The pandemic has shown the dangers of understaffed aged care facilities, with a lack of support from management, as well as a lack of investment in training and skills. Recommendations in the report that move toward safe staffing, as well as minimum qualification requirements.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil,

“The crisis facing the aged care sector has been at the centre of public concern for a long time, especially in the wake of the pandemic. It is important to heed the recommendations addressing the need for safe staffing, across a range of roles. Only with the time to care and the right mix of skills can the holistic, high-quality care that older Australians deserve be delivered. It is heartening to see the Royal Commission specifically call out the need for better wages and labour standards.”

“The Royal Commission has found what we have long known: workers in aged care are overworked, understaffed and underpaid. Hopefully the findings of this report will be a step in the right direction, however the Morrison Government failed to outline today how it is they plan to actually implement those recommendations.

“As well as wanting to make sure that workers in the industry are respected, we also know that this will have a positive impact on the residents in aged care homes. At the moment, only a quarter of aged care residents feel that their needs are being met, and they deserve better.

“The Morrison Government needs to wholeheartedly commit reforming this broken sector. The findings and recommendations in this report have come from people who know and understand the aged care industry, and what is required to make it a safe and decent place for both workers and older Australians.

**Media contact:** Kleo Cruse 0433 021 999