

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE QUALITY AND SAFETY

**FURTHER SUBMISSION OF THE AUSTRALIAN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY FEDERATION IN
RELATION TO THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN AGED CARE**

1. This Further Submission is provided by the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) subsequent to our Initial Submission (ANM.0020.0001.0001), which focused on the impact of COVID-19 in aged care up until 30 June 2020, and in response to ongoing developments regarding the impact of the pandemic on the aged care sector.
2. As indicated in our Initial Submission, the number of COVID-19 infections at that time in residential aged care facilities, and among those receiving in-home aged care, was relatively low. Though it should be noted, because of the vulnerability of the elderly to COVID-19, more than a quarter of all deaths from the virus at that time had occurred amongst those living in residential aged care. The ANMF submitted that the relatively effective containment of COVID-19 in aged care at that time was largely a product of Australia's success as a whole rather than that of the aged care sector. The ANMF also submitted that there was much that could be learned from the aged care sector's response to the pandemic, most particularly the urgent need for appropriate staffing levels and skills mix across the sector.
3. Since the date of the Initial Submission, uncontrolled community transmission of COVID-19 in Victoria has seen a dramatic increase in infection rates among that state's recipients of aged care services. As at 22/07/20 there are 383 active cases of COVID-19 in aged care across more than 45 aged care settings, with, regrettably, 13 deaths. It should be noted that 197 of these cases are in residential aged care, 9 in community care and the remainder amongst aged care workers.
4. Considerable uncertainty remains as to the duration of the current outbreak in Victoria and whether Australia can continue to contain COVID-19 in other regions and prevent a 'second wave'. Uncertainty also remains as to how effectively Australia's elderly will continue to be protected from COVID-19. The experience in Victoria and that of many countries around the world demonstrates that it is too early to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the aged care sector in Australia, most particularly its care-recipients, or to draw final conclusions regarding the sector's success in responding to the pandemic.
5. With many issues emerging, one example of which is the high rate of infection rates among aged care workers in Victoria indicating the need for urgent workforce support, the ANMF foreshadows that it may seek an opportunity to file a Supplementary Submission in relation to the impact of COVID-19 in aged care.
6. The ANMF is conscious of the Royal Commission Sydney Hearing 2 scheduled for August 10-13 in relation to the impact of COVID-19 and the desirability of any Supplementary Submission to take account of the timing of that hearing.