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Media Release

New Research: Trust and safety key to speaking up about aged care concerns

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has today released new research on barriers that stop older people from speaking up when their rights in aged care are not respected.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner Liz-Hefren Webb said the findings show that older people's expectations of care align closely with the new rights-based aged care laws.

"Respect, safety and being listened to are key expectations, yet many older people do not feel safe or confident in raising concerns about their aged care," the Commissioner said.

"The decision to raise concerns depends on whether people feel that acting on their concerns is worth the effort.

"It's encouraging that most people would first raise concerns with their provider, but for many a fear of reprisal, of not being listened to or not being taken seriously prevents them speaking up," said the Commissioner.

The research included a national survey of nearly 2,300 older people and their supporters, and 60 in-depth interviews and discussion groups. The researchers engaged with older people receiving home care and living in residential care, and explored barriers specific to First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The research underpins the Commission's current information program, "*Choice, dignity, respect – your rights in aged care*", aimed at strengthening awareness, confidence and trust in aged care rights across Australia.

In response to the findings, the Commissioner's message to older people is, "It is ok to speak up, sharing your concerns can help improve your care. No concern is too small.

"Your aged care provider must respect your rights and have a complaints process that is easy to understand and use. Rights-based aged care includes creating an inclusive and safe relationship that encourages and invites feedback from the people in their care."

The Commission's aim is to help older people and their supporters understand they have rights and protections in aged care and there is a safe and supportive pathway for raising their concerns.

"In most cases, speaking to your aged care provider first can solve an issue. But if you still have concerns, the Commission is available to help. We can be contacted by telephone on 1800 951 822 or by visiting our website at www.agedcarequality.gov.au."

A summary of the research findings is available on the Commission's website at www.agedcarequality.gov.au/choice-dignity-and-respect-research-summary.

For interview requests and enquiries: media@agedcarequality.gov.au

About the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is the national regulator of aged care services in Australia. It is responsible for protecting and enhancing the safety, health, wellbeing and quality of life of people receiving aged care.

More information about the rights of people receiving aged care is available on the Commission's website at: www.agedcarequality.gov.au/older-people/choice-dignity-respect-your-rights-aged-care.