

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New ‘One-stop-shop’ a welcome first step for older South Australians in care

COTA SA, the peak body for older South Australians, has joined COTA Australia in welcoming the Federal Government’s announcement of a new Aged Care Safety and Quality Commission to commence in January 2019.

The reform will see complaints referred to a single and independent agency, and follows the introduction of unannounced visits by quality assessors.

COTA SA Chief Executive Jane Mussared says the changes were driven in part by the failures that took place in South Australia, including at the Mitcham and Oakden aged care facilities.

“Some brave and tenacious South Australian older people and their families created real urgency around the reform,” Ms Mussared said.

“While this is by no means the silver bullet, it’s a first and important step forward for our most vulnerable older people and their families who have prevailed against a system that was not working. They brought the failures to light and they have begun to create change. We applaud their courage through a very difficult time.”

“As a community we have high expectations of our aged care. Complaints are an important part of an effective and welcome early warning system. We want a system that is easy to use, that empowers and encourages people to draw attention to aged care that is not optimal and that enables this to be acted on quickly and fairly.

“We look forward to these changes delivering on that expectation.

“We share COTA Australia’s concern that this is only part of the solution. The Carnell-Paterson report also called for a Consumer Commissioner to promote the rights of older people and to support people using aged care to be powerful, informed and aware of their rights,” she said.

Ms Mussared says older people continue to tell COTA SA how important the quality and attributes of aged care staff are in their trust and experience of aged care.

“Many older people report very positive experiences. While the policy and systems need to be there to support them, it’s ultimately the skills, kindness and commitment of staff on the ground that older people say makes the biggest difference,” she said.

“Along with our colleagues at COTA Australia, we will continue to advocate for the rights and needs of our most vulnerable people in aged care facilities.”

COTA SA is an older people's movement run by, for and with older people. COTA SA represents the aspirations, interests and rights of 633,000 older South Australians.
Further information on COTA SA can be found at www.cotasa.org.au.

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