



## Royal Commission consultation: Virtual Conversations

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety commenced on 18 January 2019, with its Interim Report delivered on 31 October 2019. The Commission must provide the final report by 26 February 2021.

The Commission has continually highlighted the need for Australia's Aged Care system to be transformed to deliver high quality services and effective care outcomes for older Australians to improve their health and wellbeing. The Royal Commission has prioritised hearing from consumers, their families and carers as those most directly affected by the work of the Commission.

### What do we want to learn from our current consultations?

What we would hope to learn from participants are their views on the recommendations made by Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission to inform COTA's responses to the Commission, from the lived experience of those directly affected by its deliberations, or who may be in the future.

This session's focus will be on proposals relating to [Informal Carer Support Services and Respite](#). We would like feedback on what you think of the proposals and if you have any other suggestions.

### Background

- Informal carers provide the majority of the support to older Australians living in their own homes and communities.
- Informal carers are partners, family members, friends and neighbours who provide unpaid assistance with a range of supports including daily living tasks, transport and social support.
- Many people would prefer to remain living at home if possible. The informal caring role can become increasingly complex and demanding; and may include caring for people who have very high care needs or who are living with dementia.

## Proposals by Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission

### 1. Accessing information and support

- The proposal being put to the Royal Commission is that the Australian Government should fund and support information and other local services to ensure that carers know about services that are available to support them.
- In a redesigned aged care system, the supports available to carers would be broadly publicised and promoted. The aged care system has a role in educating the broader community as to what supports are available. The community also has a role in promoting this information and reaching out to those who need assistance.
- Local strategies are considered a key element in linking people with information and support. Suggestions include involving local government, community organisations and diverse needs groups in forming and informing local responses; and the establishment of a system of 'care finders' in local communities.

### 2. Recognition of the carer role in the aged care assessment

- Submissions to the Royal Commission have emphasised that carers should have their needs taken into account in their own right.
- A person with higher needs requiring formal government-subsidised care or support to remain living at home receives what is called an aged care assessment. You may have heard this referred to as an ACAT.
- Counsel Assisting proposes that the support needs of the informal carer in their carer role need to be included more specifically as part of this assessment. This is to ensure the carer receives appropriate support in their caring role.
- These supports would be separate to the needs of the person needing aged care and could include counselling, training and respite.

### 3. Respite

- The availability of respite is recognised as an important support for carers in their caring role, as well as providing potential benefits for the person receiving care.
- My Aged Care is intended to facilitate planned respite, and Carers Gateway provides access to emergency respite.
- Respite through the aged care system (My Aged Care) includes residential respite (in a residential aged care home), flexible respite, cottage respite and centre based respite.
- The Counsel Assisting proposes that a redesigned system should enable regular and flexible respite along the way, including in the early stages.

## Discussion

- What do you think about these proposals?
- Which of these proposals do you support and why?
- Which of these proposals worry you and why?
- What would you like to see that is not included?
- Which of these proposals are most important to you?
- Can you see these proposals working in the areas that you live or work?