

Media Statement

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ADVOCACY ORGANISATIONS WELCOME THE EXAMINATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY BY ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE

Today, Prime Minister Scott Morrison MP has announced the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission into Aged Care – and key advocacy organisations are pleased that young people with disability living in aged care will have their voices heard.

Summer Foundation CEO, Luke Bo’sher, said more than 6,200 young people were currently living in aged care facilities, with 50 young people entering aged care every week.

“We welcome the announcement of the Royal Commission’s Terms of Reference, which specifically references young people with disability.

“This Royal Commission is a unique opportunity to address the practice of young people entering aged care. Better, more appropriate alternatives must be found.

“The Royal Commission is a unique opportunity to examine the pathways out of hospital that are leading to young people ending up in nursing homes in the first place. We are very pleased that the Terms of Reference give Justice McGrath sufficient scope to examine these pathways.

“Aged care services are not set up to meet the needs of young people. Young people with disability deserve adequate support to stay connected with family and friends in the community, and to live fulfilled lives. For many young people living in nursing homes, this simply isn’t happening.”

Youngcare CEO, Anthony Ryan, also warmly welcomed today’s confirmation that the Royal Commission will examine the circumstances of young people in aged care, but added that it was critical that the voices of the young people themselves are heard.

“For the Royal Commission to be able to do its job effectively, it is critical young people have the opportunity to genuinely participate,” he said.

“I am pleased that the Terms of Reference recognise that young people in aged care will need ‘special support to share their experiences’.

“We are urging the young people we represent to get involved and have their voices heard. We stand ready to support the full participation of young people across Australia in this Royal Commission.”

Aged care is no place for young people. Every single government inquiry over the past decade has confirmed this, pointing out that residential aged care is designed and run for older people.

The facts and outcomes are bleak. Quality of life for young people living in aged care is typically low and they face severe social isolation – over 40% see family or friends once per year or less. Only 1 in 10 are ever likely to return to family or their former home.

Luke Bo’sher said this was clearly an unsustainable and unsuitable outcome.

“This Royal Commission should not re-open the question of whether aged care is the right place for young people with disability. In Australia, we have a consensus that the disability system is far better placed than the aged care system, to support young people with disability.

“The Royal Commission should focus on ensuring the disability, health and housing systems deliver the range of alternatives to aged care that will keep young people with disability out of nursing homes.”

[ENDS]

Quotes attributable to:

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