

Meeting	Mid-Term Conference
Date	14-16 June 2017
Title	CALL FOR HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE
Resolution	<p>Residential Aged Care Inquiry: That National Council of Women Australia calls on the Federal Government to conduct a House of Representatives Committee of Inquiry into Residential Aged Care, the inquiry to be wide ranging and include all aspects of residential aged care, including in particular:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Quality of care, including the impact of the removal of the low care-high distinction in permanent residential aged care from 1 July 2014 b. Accreditation including unannounced spot checks of residential aged care facilities and the effectiveness of the accreditation standards in promoting good care and preventing poor care; c. Staffing and skill mix requirements in residential aged care; and d. Complaints handling and information on residential aged care facilities, including governance, Aged Care Quality Agency reports, upheld complaints and audited accounts.
Rationale	<p>There are almost 175,000 residents on over 2680 Residential aged care facilities. No longer is there any distinction between high care and low care residential care facilities. The Federal government spends more than \$16 billion dollars on ageing and aged care services and residents in residential aged care pay substantial amounts of money for their care.</p> <p>The government makes a significantly higher subsidy payment for a resident who is considered high care than a resident who is considered low care. However, facilities opt for more high care residents often in facilities that still operate as if they were a low care facility.</p> <p>In 2015 A Senate Committee reported the adequacy of existing care arrangements available for young people with severe physical, mental or intellectual disabilities in Australia. The Committee members during the inquiry heard some horrific stories.</p> <p>There are some horrific stories to tell about older residents in residential aged care- just ask anyone who has had to place a family member in residential aged care. The number of deaths in residential aged care by other than natural causes is alone cause for concern - 2000 cases in six years. I have been told of many incidents of residents not receiving assistance to eat food, residents suffering significant weight loss over a few months, water jugs placed across the other side of the room from residents who are unable to mobilise, residents not receiving adequate personal hygiene, many falls by residents waiting long periods for assistance and the list goes on.</p> <p>There are of course facilities providing good quality care. However, we all continually hear of horrific stories and complaints not been adequately addressed. Many residents are unable to use the complaints scheme and many do not have family members who will advocate on their behalf. If the process is used there is no confidence that things will change.</p> <p>Almost always a women is the primary carer for an elderly parent or relative. This resolution is a very important one as if residential care is the only option for the parent or relative there must be confidence in the system- something that is sadly lacking at the present time.</p>