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MEDIA RELEASE

AGED CARE STAFF IGNORED BY GOVERNMENT

Aged Care Association Australia (ACAA) today asked why the Federal Government continues to ignore the poor wages that aged care providers are forced to pay aged care staff, due to the chronic underfunding of aged care.

ACAA, CEO, Rod Young, said 'the announcement yesterday that the Government annual indexation for aged care would be set at 1.9% was a real indictment of this Government's attitude towards our oldest citizens and how they undervalue the wonderful work of the 240,000 workers who provide the dedicated care and services to these very frail older persons.'

'If a country should be judged on how it treats its elderly it should also be judged on how it treats the staff who provide the compassion, care and devotion to provide the highest quality of service within very limited resources said,' Mr Young.

'Our staff are not there for the money, they are passionate about what they do but when your pay rates are falling behind everyone else, there comes a point when sacrifice and patience is beyond endurance,' Mr Young said.

'The aged care industry calls on the Government to recognize that providers have paid a consistent proportion of their income, about 70% of income is spent on wages, for the past decade. So there is no sense in the Government claiming record expenditure on aged care; when in fact most of any additional money is either growth in client numbers or escalating acuity of the residents,' Mr Young said.

This situation is no longer sustainable. Our nursing and care staff can no longer be the recipients of Commonwealth penny pinching. A reasonable wage for the people who undertake this important work is essential otherwise staff will leave and that will impact on the care that can be provided, said Rod Young.

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