

17 April 2013



The Royal  
Australian &  
New Zealand  
College of  
Psychiatrists

CELEBRATING  
**50**  
YEARS  
1963-2013

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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To Whom It May Concern

### **Inquiry into Aged Care: Living Longer, Living Better**

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs' inquiry into the Government's Aged Care legislative review, 'Living Longer, Living Better.'

The RANZCP congratulates the Commonwealth Government's commitment to improve aged care facilities. The RANZCP is committed to improving health outcomes of older Australians, and would like the Committee to refer to the RANZCP Position Statement *Priority must be given to investment that improves the mental health of older Australia* (which can be found here: <http://www.ranzcp.org/Policy-and-advocacy/Aged-Care.aspx>).

The RANZCP welcomes the removal of the distinction between high level care and low level care for the purpose of approvals, which it requested in its submission to the proposed amendments in December 2012. The RANZCP also welcomes the commitment to mental health with the proposed dementia supplement and a new veterans' mental health supplement. The RANZCP would welcome future similar initiatives that recognised the particular needs to older Australians with mental health problems who require support residential aged care support; including in the community.

However, the RANZCP notes that more needs to be done to recognise and provide support to older people without dementia. At age 80 only twenty per cent of people will have dementia, and mental health issues such as anxiety or depression are more common than dementia at age 65. The RANZCP has long advocated for the removal of all barriers that prevent older Australians in residential aged care accessing the same mental health services as the rest of the community. Increased investment is required in this area to improve access to services for older Australians in residential care who are suffering from mental health problems.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in the submission, please contact Dr Anne Ellison,

Yours sincerely

Dr Maria Tomasic  
**President**

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