



Australian Government  
Australian Aged Care Quality Agency

## Media statement

04 August 2017

### Statement in relation to issues aired on ABC 7:30 program

The overriding objective of the Australian Aged Care Quality Agency is to promote continuous quality improvement in the delivery of aged care services through an accreditation and monitoring system. In relation to over 2,600 residential aged care services throughout Australia, the Quality Agency is an active regulator and it holds providers to account where they are not meeting the Accreditation Standards.

As part of its work, the Quality Agency publishes extensive information on individual aged care services and uses a range of information sources to fulfil its compliance monitoring responsibility. The Quality Agency welcomes the provision of information by residents, their families, staff and media, and we regularly receive referrals from the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner and the Department of Health, which are then acted on by our assessment teams.

The Quality Agency acknowledges the evident distress of the families appearing in the ABC 7.30 programs on 2 and 3 August. Any mistreatment of older Australians is unacceptable and the safety, health and well-being of older people who reside in aged care services is of paramount importance.

The Quality Agency wishes to set out information in relation to its role and processes, the two specific facilities highlighted in the ABC 7.30 programs on 2 and 3 August 2017, and to correct a number of assertions made in the stories.

#### Role and Processes of the Quality Agency

The Quality Agency is tasked with promoting continuous quality improvement in service delivery through an accreditation and monitoring system, relating to both residential aged care and home care. The Accreditation Standards, legislated by the Commonwealth and administered by the Quality Agency, are fundamentally concerned with minimising and managing risk to advance the care outcomes for residents of Australian aged care homes.

The key processes undertaken by the Quality Agency in assessing compliance of aged care services with their obligations under the law and the Accreditation Standards include:

- Accreditation/re-accreditation site audits, which must occur at least once every three years;
- Review audits, which are undertaken where specific risks of failure to meet the standards or harm to care recipients have been brought to the attention of the Quality Agency; and
- Unannounced and announced visits – each residential aged care home receives at least one unannounced visit a year.

#### What we do

In the 2015/2016 year, the Quality Agency undertook 858 accreditation audits to measure performance against the Accreditation Standards. In the same year the Quality Agency also undertook 2,866 unannounced visits to aged care homes to monitor compliance against these Standards.

A critical part of the Quality Agency's accreditation and compliance monitoring process is talking to residents and their families – over the course of a year, the Quality Agency's assessors talk to around 50,000 residents and their representatives. In accordance with legislation, when the Quality Agency assessment team is undertaking an accreditation/re-accreditation audit they will speak to at least 10%

of an aged care service's residents or their representatives. Their feedback forms part of the performance assessment of the aged care service.

The Quality Agency holds service providers to account where they are not meeting the expected standards. Where the Quality Agency finds non-compliance with the Accreditation Standards, it notifies the service provider of the areas where improvement is required and if this doesn't occur in accordance with the prescribed timetable the Quality Agency advises the Department of Health. In those instances where the Quality Agency identifies serious risk to one or more residents, this is immediately conveyed to the Department of Health. The Department assesses this information to determine the most appropriate and proportionate response based on the identified risks to care recipients. The Department can take immediate action by imposing sanctions where there is immediate and severe risk to care recipients. This action is aimed at protecting current and future care recipients' health, welfare and interests as well as returning the provider back to compliance as quickly as possible.

#### The information we publish

Contrary to the assertion made in the 7.30 program, the Quality Agency publishes all accreditation and review audit reports for each aged care service.

In 2016, the Quality Agency introduced a new Consumer Experience Report (CER) methodology that provides a structured approach to engagement with residents and their representatives, mitigating the risk that providers may exclude selected consumers from providing feedback. From 30 June 2017 these CERs are published alongside the relevant accreditation report for the aged care service on our website: See:

<http://www.aacqa.gov.au/publications/consumer-experience-reports>

#### **Opal Aged Care homes raised in story**

##### Opal Lakeview

The most recent accreditation of the Opal Lakeview aged care home by the Quality Agency occurred in July 2015. The re-accreditation audit involved a Quality Agency assessment team of two people over two days. A mix of nursing staff, management, catering, maintenance, administration and lifestyle staff were interviewed. In addition, 17 care recipients and/or their representatives were also interviewed about the home. All feedback received by the assessment team was considered in the assessment against the Accreditation Standards. The 2015 re-accreditation report was published on the Quality Agency's website in accordance with standard practice.

The Quality Agency conducts at least one unannounced visit per year to every residential aged care service. Unannounced assessment contacts were conducted at Opal Lakeview in September 2015, October 2016, and February 2017. A further unannounced visit was made by an assessment team in July 2017, which is currently under consideration by the Quality Agency. Each visit was for a full day and involved two assessors reviewing a number of expected outcomes of the Accreditation Standards.

##### Opal Leamington

The Quality Agency's most recent accreditation of the Opal Leamington aged care home occurred in April 2015. The re-accreditation audit involved a Quality Agency assessment team of two people over three days. A mix of nursing staff, management, administration and lifestyle staff were interviewed. In addition, 16 care recipients and/or their representatives were also interviewed about the home. All feedback received by the assessment team was considered in the assessment against the Accreditation Standards. The 2015 re-accreditation report was published on the Quality Agency's website in accordance with standard practice.

On 21 January 2016, the Quality Agency conducted an unannounced visit at Opal Leamington following a referral of information from the Aged Care Complaints Commissioner. The Quality Agency found Opal Leamington to be compliant with the Accreditation Standards. The Quality Agency

conducted a further annual unannounced assessment on 20 December 2016 and no no-compliance or other issues were identified.

### **Oakden Older Persons Mental Health Service**

There were serious failures of care uncovered in the Quality Agency's March 2017 review audit of the Makk and McLeay wings of the Oakden facility in Adelaide, and in the Oakden Report finalised the following month by South Australia's Chief Psychiatrist.

As indicated by the Quality Agency at the time, these poor outcomes for residents are highly concerning, particularly in light of the re-accreditation audit undertaken by the Quality Agency in February 2016. For this reason, the CEO of the Quality Agency has commissioned external independent advice on how the Quality Agency can improve its processes, particularly when assessing more complex aged care facilities and identifying serious risk.

Separately, the Minister for Ageing has commissioned a broad-ranging independent review of Australia's aged care regulatory framework in the light of the events at the Oakden facility.

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### **More information**

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