



# Aged Care Inquiry

For a fairer society

Our seniors deserve a high standard of care as they age. Labour, Greens and Grey Power collaborated in a comprehensive inquiry in 2010, and have undertaken this follow up inquiry to respond to ongoing concerns and new challenges that have emerged. While improvements have been made since our 2010 Report, this inquiry has found that many of the problems remain.

The following recommendations signal the direction of travel both political parties agree to pursuing in aged care. This is an aspirational vision to improve the standard of aged care services for our older New Zealanders, ensure the sustainability of service providers and improve the health of the population.

## Recommendations

1. Improve the quality and consistency of care through the use of a common assessment tool, a consistent level of care across all DHBs and updated care standards.
2. Improved accountability throughout the aged care system through the establishment of an Aged Care Commissioner, reporting and performance measures based on health outcomes and improved complaints mechanisms.
3. Investigate affordable and appropriate housing options for seniors to provide a transition between living at home and residential care.
4. Encourage innovation in the delivery of aged care to cater to the needs of a growing and diverse population.
5. Increase funding for aged care provision and ensure that the funding model provides viable aged care services for specific communities, including small towns and rural areas.

### **Improve the consistency and quality of care**

The inquiries across New Zealand and the evidence from organisations involved in the aged care system demonstrated that there is still inconsistency in care provided across homes, across facilities and across DHBs. Some patients are suffering unnecessarily and missing out on quality care. The assessment tool (interRAI) needs to provide the foundation for care plans based on need, and not used as a rationing tool for access to rest homes and DHB services.

## **Strengthened accountability**

There have been improvements in auditing, but there are still too many persistent problems and a lack of confidence in the systems for reporting and accountability. The creation of the role of Commission for Aged Care is important to strengthen accountability and improve consistency in aged care across New Zealand. The current auditing system is compliance heavy for small facilities but does not provide important information on health outcomes, as has been called for in previous reports. This report contains recommendations for improvement.

## **Affordable and appropriate housing options**

There are challenges ahead, particularly in dealing with the impacts of the housing crisis that has resulted in higher rents and a fall in home ownership. Purpose-built accommodation, such as the community-based housing pioneered by Abbeyfield and others, will be needed to provide a transition between living at home and the level of care provided in rest homes, particularly for those who live alone or without a close community. There needs to be housing that is affordable and appropriate for seniors, with shared services and a sense of community.

## **Encourage Innovation**

There are exciting innovations being trialled in the sector, drawing on good practice internationally, and these need to be encouraged. Innovation has an important role in meeting the large increase in the numbers and diversity of seniors needing aged care.

## **Increase funding and reform the funding model**

There has been important progress in improving pay for aged care workers. However, the implementation of the Pay Equity legislation must be fair to providers, be funded adequately and provide career opportunities and training for young New Zealanders, to help meet the projected growth in demand. The funding model used to provide aged care needs to be reviewed to meet the changing needs of the sector, particularly smaller and rural aged care providers. Additional funding will be required in health to address unmet needs for elective surgery and the costs of providing a good standard of care for all.

## **Conclusion**

The recommendations in this report will support opportunities for community engagement, support and companionship, as well as consistently high standards of aged care for all New Zealanders. The recommendations signal the direction of travel that both Labour and the Greens agree to pursue in aged care. This is an aspirational vision to improve the standard of aged care services for our older New Zealanders, ensure the sustainability of service providers and improve the health of our population.

[www.greens.org.nz/  
aged-care-report-2017](http://www.greens.org.nz/aged-care-report-2017)

The logo for the Green Party, featuring a stylized green leaf above the word "Green" in a white serif font.

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