

MEDIA RELEASE

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Improve aged care for people with Parkinson's

People living with Parkinson's are overrepresented in Aged Care Facilities. They comprise 8 per cent of the total compared to the general over 65 person who makes up only 1 per cent.

Today, ahead of World Parkinson's Day, we call on the Federal Government to provide better care for people with Parkinson's by using home care services or in a residential aged care facility.

Too often we have seen poor care due to a lack of understanding of the symptoms of Parkinson's in an aged care facility. Take the case of patient A, discussed during the hearings the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Patient A's children brought a special fork for him with a thick handle into the Aged Care Facility to help Patient A feed himself as he had advanced Parkinson's. A lot of the meals provided by the facility weren't suitable for him – meals such as soup or whole chicken schnitzel. Patient A would often have the meal 'plonked in front of him' without his specialised fork and plate - he couldn't eat his food. Even more distressing was a lack of understanding of Parkinson's symptoms. Patient A's family found people grabbing his legs and throwing his legs up on the bed and saying, "Stop shaking. You're setting off the night alarm." Some people with Parkinson's shake, especially when their medication starts to wear off, meaning that it is logical that he would shake, and he would set the alarm off.

The CEO of Parkinson's was shocked "Clearly we need carers to have a better understanding of the needs of people with Parkinson's – this level of care is not good enough".

In addition, over 70,000 people living with Parkinson's are engaged with the non-residential segment of the aged care system – More home care packages would allow people to stay at home with appropriate care.

People with Parkinson's need better care.

- Specialist medical care in an Aged Care Facility so that they can manage their Parkinson's and maintain the best quality of life possible.
- Better access to primary health care services.
- Better access to Home Care Packages
- Improved care from Home Care Package Providers – through educated and empathetic carers.