

To the Fair Work Commission:

Although not and employer I felt driven to forward my thoughts on the Aged care pay case.

The base pay rate for Personal Care assistant in the Aged Care sector would vary between \$22.00 to \$26.00 dependant on years' service and experience.

This clearly in today's world is unacceptable in any work environment.

Carers work in an environment that is physically and emotionally difficult as anyone who has looked after an aging loved one could attest to. Multiple the interactions that a carer has in any given day by the number of residents then you have an understanding of the level of stress.

Ageing brings on many hurdles to one's life and it is the presence of carers and carers alone that can make this journey easier.

Having worked as PCA in aged care for the past 7 years I have noted the following:

Carers are the primary support for residents.

Carers provide the physical assistance

Carers provide the emotional support

Carers provide feedback back to the facility to ensure ongoing modification to a resident's needs. This involves an ever increasing amount of documentation which at times seems to be more about the facility maintaining their accreditation than providing information to improve a resident's life.

Carers are required to obtain observations such as BP, Temperatures, weights, and full ward tests.

Carers are required to maintain the resident's physical environment such as wardrobe and bedroom condition.

These requirements are expected regardless of the staffing levels which are not regulated to maintain any Carer to resident ratio.

In a facility of say 50 residents it is acceptable to have 5 Carers who will need to provide the services outlined above in any given shift.

Flushing out these numbers we get the following.

No. Carers	Hrs per shift for each carer	Total number of hrs available	No. of residents	Hrs per resident for each carer
5	7.5	37.5	50	0.75

A carer is therefore expected in 0.75 hrs, (45mins) to provide services to every single resident as outlined above.

Having communicated with other carers working in other facilities these numbers are not uncommon.

Given the fact that the commission's recommendations are a minimum of 200 mins of care per resident I can suggest that carers are providing services under stress on a daily basis. Granted this number also includes 40 minutes by a registered nurse, the numbers still don't stack up.

An increase in wages is argued against by owners of facilities as making their business model unviable. I would simply say that aged care is not business that should be driven by KPI's to obtain maximum profit.

From: <https://www.theweeklysource.com.au/fair-work-commission-decision-on-25-pay-raise-for-aged-care-workers-wont-be-made-until-july-2022/>

“One CEO of a stand-alone Tasmanian facility told us yesterday that with staffing costs already at 75% and increasing costs associated with compliance, they will “go broke” if the case is upheld.”

This CEO should look at what is an acceptable profit for an organisation that's roll is to provide assistance to an ageing population. I will further respond with a quote from writer Polly Dunning in the Sydney Morning Herald on July the 18th 2019 in an article on minimum wages for Nanny's:

<https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life-and-relationships/if-you-can-t-afford-to-pay-a-nanny-minimum-wage-you-can-t-afford-a-nanny-20190717-p5280o.html>

“You don't get to devalue the labour of another person and exploit them because it fits your budget better.”

In summary:

Higher pay rates will ultimately attract more candidates into the industry meaning less staff shortages and a better quality of carer.

When multi-million dollar packages are awarded to CEO's I often hear the justification trotted out that the best candidates need to be attracted to the position.

I see no reason why the same shouldn't apply to carers.

Many thanks for taking time to read this.

Livio Feliciani