

## PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CARE OPINION AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS ROYAL COMMISSION CALL FOR SYSTEM-WIDE INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT IN THE AGED CARE SECTOR

The Interim Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety was released this week, stating that the aged care system ‘does not deliver uniformly safe and quality care, is unkind and uncaring towards older people and, in too many cases, neglects them’.

The damning report has identified many systematic problems in aged care with a system that, among many other characteristics, ‘minimises the voices of people receiving care and their loved ones’. We are pleased to hear that one issue that will be focused on in 2020 is how to identify and encourage innovation and improvement in aged care.

Associate Professor Michael Greco, Chief Executive Officer of online consumer feedback platform Care Opinion Australia, said that not-for-profit Care Opinion has long recognised that consumers are best placed to inform improvements in care services due to their direct experience with the care provided.

“Some years ago, a CEO of a hospital using Care Opinion said they learnt more about their hospital from reading 10 patient stories than years of doing patient surveys. It is critical to listen to the voices of those receiving your care when they can speak freely without fear of reprisal.”

Care Opinion, initially developed in the UK 14 years ago, has been in operation in Australia since 2012 to provide a solution to shifting cultures towards consumer-centric care. Care Opinion:

- Is relational rather than transactional, such as rating and reviewing sites, because it creates dialogue in a safe way
- Gives volume to the voices of people receiving care and their loved ones
- Helps people make informed choices by the visibility of what consumers say about a service and how providers respond to that feedback
- Is all about transparency focused on improvement
- Allows consumers to express appreciation to care workers getting it right.

Associate Professor Greco works closely with several state and federal governments to push for transparent feedback in the health, aged care and community sectors to inform system improvements.

He says: “Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director of the Scottish Government noted that Care Opinion has been the single most important thing in the past 10 years that has promoted their journey towards a more person-centred healthcare system”.

“Listening to the experiences of people receiving care is as important for identifying the need for system improvement as it is for identifying what is working well and where staff are providing exceptional care.

“Here at Care Opinion, we hear many heartwarming stories of the care received and relationships developed between staff and residents and their families. While there is clearly a long way to go, we want to recognise and commend the many dedicated, hard working staff involved in the aged care sector who go above and beyond to provide high-quality service to those in need.

“I urge aged care providers across Australia not to sit back and wait for the Royal Commission to wind up its final report, but to take action and start listening to what their consumers have to say in an open and transparent way and start the healing process across the sector.”

Care Opinion focuses on keeping both staff and consumers safe in the stories being told through our moderation process, and support providers as they respond to consumers in a relational way.

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***

For interviews, please contact:

Rebecca Somerville

Care Opinion Australia

Ph: 07 3354 4525

Email: [info@careopinion.org.au](mailto:info@careopinion.org.au)

Website: <https://www.careopinion.org.au/>

- Care Opinion is a website where the public can publish their experiences of aged and community care services. The platform allows staff to interact with these consumers to help improve care.
- Care Opinion is not-for-profit and exists to help improve care services by enabling open and transparent dialogue between consumers and service providers.
- Care Opinion cares about the public voice and that that voice is heard (not just measured)
- Care Opinion starts with what the storyteller wants to say (not necessarily what service providers want to ask)
- Care Opinion believes we can change the care experience by connecting people (and not just collecting data)
- Care Opinion does this in a public way so as to be of benefit to everyone.