

COVID-19 toll on the aged care system

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COVID-related or confirmed deaths in the population among care home residents

Country	Date	Approach to measuring deaths	Total #deaths linked to COVID-19	# deaths of care home residents linked to COVID-19	# of care home resident deaths as % of all COVID deaths
Australia	18/05/2020	Confirmed	99	29	29%
Belgium	18/05/2020	Confirmed + Probable	9,080	4,646	51%
Canada	08/05/2020	Confirmed + Probable	4,740	3,890	82%
France	18/05/2020	Confirmed + Probable	28,239	14,363	51%
Germany	20/05/2020	Confirmed	8,090	3,029	37%
Ireland	06/05/2020	Confirmed + Probable	1,375	857	62%
Norway	18/05/2020	Confirmed	233	135	58%
England & Wales	08/05/2020	Probable + Excess deaths	37,375 (probable) 49,470 (excess deaths)	12,526 (probable) 25,591 (excess deaths)	38% (probable) 52% (excess deaths)
United States	20/05/2020	Confirmed	93,163	30,130	41%

Source: Comas-Herrera A, Zalakaín J, Litwin C, Hsu AT, Lane N & Fernández J-L (2020) *Mortality associated with COVID19 outbreaks in care homes: early international evidence*. Article in LTCcovid.org, International Long-Term Care Policy Network, CPEC-LSE, 21 May 2020

What are we doing well/not so well in Australia?

WELL

- Excellent (overall) public health response
- Transparency of COVID data for residential aged care
- \$440m funding inc for 'surge' staffing & improving infection control +:
 - \$235m - COVID-19 'retention bonus' for aged care workers

NOT SO WELL

- Shift to almost exclusive emphasis on clinical care
- Loss of staffing in residential aged care
- Loss of hours in home care
- PPE access still limited in home care

The Aged Care System after COVID 19?

The conditions of work are the conditions of care

Post COVID we need to:

- Address decent work deficits: wages + working time & job security
- Increase 'time to care' to provide for social & emotional wellbeing
- Build in permanent 'surge' capacity in workforce for the 'regular irregularities'

Resources & references

- Armstrong et al. (2020) Re-imagining Long-term Residential care in the COVID-19 Crisis, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/re-imagining-long-term-residential-care-covid-19-crisis>
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- Hayes et al. (2020) Care and support workers' perceptions of health and safety issues in social care during the COVID-19 pandemic <https://media.www.kent.ac.uk/se/11148/CareworkersHealthandSafetyreport15042.pdf>
- Meagher et al. (2019) Meeting the social and emotional support needs of older people using aged care services <http://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:61775/bin3892903b-31c1-4dd9-bcb0-1b14727ea8fe?view=true&xy=01>

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