



MEDIA RELEASE

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Tracey Spicer “IN CONVERSATION” with Your Side CEO Danielle Ballantine

Your Side Australia has recently filmed CEO Danielle Ballantine and Walkley Award winning journalist Tracey Spicer in a 7 part ‘In Conversation’ series, focusing on our aging population and challenges in providing quality aged care. We will be sharing these over the coming months – part one and two from today.

Some of the topics they will be taking on in the series include:

- Strengthening the workforce in aged care which is currently in crisis to deliver the volume and quality of care needed.
- Upcoming aged care sector reform and ensuring it delivers quality.
- Delivering care during a pandemic.
- What it means that women make up such a huge part of the paid and unpaid aged care workforce.
- Having conversations with loved ones about planning for care.

Videos 1 & 2

The aged and community care workforce is in crisis. This is a long term demographic challenge that has been intensified by the challenges of dealing with the COVID pandemic.

Within 20 years, we will have 3 generations accessing care as a result of us living longer. On some estimates Australia will need 900,000 to 1 million extra care workers by 2050 - about 4 times what we have now. The reforms today and our response as an industry need to be future proofed.

“Today’s care investment can’t just be for today’s ageing generation. We must also ensure that we are looking after our future generations. The number of people who will require care in the next 20 years is enormous. Paying for it and recruiting a workforce to deliver it will be a big challenge. We need government and the sector to work together to solve it, and the taxpayer to be willing to fund it,” says Your Side CEO Danielle Ballantine. “We need to respect our elders, but we also need to respect the workforce who supports them.”

The direct care aged care workforce employs almost a quarter of a million people currently (AIHW). It relies heavily on migrants and skilled international students. This supply of workers has been cut off for over a year, causing shortages. On top of this, as we manage COVID outbreaks in our community, staff who are exposed are required to isolate at home and keep vulnerable people safe, further exasperating shortages. Older people will be experiencing this in the form of cancelled or reduced services in their own home, or longer waiting lists to enter a residential facility.



Change must come from all levels; at the highest level in the form of legislation, program redesign, regulation and funding. But there also needs to be change in community perspective – how we value the people we care for and how we value the care workforce.

“All care providers need to take responsibility and proactively make and create change. They need to welcome high standards in delivering quality care, be innovative and adaptable, and create opportunities for staff career progression. That is very hard, but worth it,” says Ms Ballantine. “This means looking at wages, conditions, and training.”

“There's a workforce problem in the care sector that will require a coordinated, Australia-wide response. We need to keep a focus on reducing the length of waiting lists, and recruit and train a workforce to actually do the work. The projected demand for workers far outstrips current supply, and the existing workforce earns in many cases a dollar more an hour than minimum wage for what is in reality skilled work, particularly in a pandemic. We just won't see the improvements in quality care we expect unless we improve pay and training for workers delivering care support and services,” says Ms Spicer.

This pandemic has taught us a lot about which roles are really essential, and care workers have been on the front lines every day trying to keep vulnerable members of our population safe. If we want good care, we need to make sure we all work together to provide it. The good news is that this investment could deliver multiple outcomes: high quality care for those who need it, and a good supply of decent, fulfilling jobs in metro and regional areas alike, with workers whose income benefits their local communities and returns tax back into the system.

While working full-time and raising two children, Tracey was a carer for her beloved grandfather in his final years. Her father now has emphysema and the family rallied around to organise support services.

Danielle also has her own carer story, supporting her dad with terminal brain cancer. Despite several years working in the sector, Danielle's personal experience of navigating the complex health and care sector lit a fire in her to reimagine a world where people could access a simplified person centred model of care as they age.

To watch the first two installments of the 'In Conversation' series see below. Danielle and Tracey are available for interview.

If you live in Sydney give [Your Side](#) a call today on **1300 134 332** or email customercare@yourside.org.au. They are friendly, offer expert advice and here to help.



VIDEOS

[In Conversation – Part One: CLICK HERE](#)

[In Conversation – Part Two: CLICK HERE](#)

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PHOTOS by Bec Lewis

[Download photos of Tracey Spicer & Danielle Ballantine](#) [CLICK HERE](#)

AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

- Tracey Spicer
- Danielle Ballantine - CEO, Your Side Australia