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# Aged care royal commission hears of grandfather sick of sitting in his own faeces

BY **JESSE THOMPSON**

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PHOTO The man's family says he suffered a series of falls, some resulting in fractures.

SUPPLIED: ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE

The standard of care provided to an elderly man, often found sitting in his own faeces, at a regional Queensland aged care facility was so appalling even his own granddaughter was too distressed to visit, the aged care royal commission has heard.

## Key points:

- The man's daughter said he went from being active to bedridden in three months
- The commission heard a carer told the family the man was only supposed to use three incontinence pads a day
- The 85-year-old has now been moved to another facility

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When he entered the facility the cheery, relatively healthy man's family thought nothing of visiting him almost daily.

The 85-year-old, who was not identified, was raised on a farm, loved his grandkids and the outdoors, and was a landscape architect and popular local artist before he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2014.

Speaking before the commission on Wednesday, a witness identified only as Ms FA gave a harrowing account of her father's treatment in the home he was admitted to in 2017.

She said alarm bells sounded early: there was a lack of staff on the floor whenever she visited, and another resident who was romantically interested in the married man was not discouraged by staff.

Her concerns grew after her father suffered a series of falls, several of them unwitnessed and some resulting in fractures, which led to him being left unattended in bed, the witness said, for significant stretches of the day.

"When dad was finally assessed by a physiotherapist ... I was told there would be limited point at this stage of his Alzheimer's as he could not follow instruction well enough to make any worthwhile progress," she said.

"Within three months of being admitted to residential aged care our dad had gone from being an active and able-bodied man to bedridden and unable to feed himself."

## 'It's really distressing'

Ms FA said she and her sisters would go to the facility frequently, and were horrified to on a number of occasions find their father's pants soiled with faeces.

"On one occasion one of my sisters told me that she had visited dad and he had soiled pants on," she said.

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Apparently soiled sheets underneath the body of an elderly man.



PHOTO [The 85-year old's family say they once found the man's bed soiled.](#)

SUPPLIED: ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE QUALITY AND SAFETY

"She said she found a carer and advised the carer of this and she said that Dad had just been changed, and he was only supposed to use three pads per day."

"My sister told me that Dad one day said to her, while she was visiting him at the hospital, that he was 'sick of sitting in his own shit'."

On another occasion, they found his fingernails dirty and unclipped, the sheet behind him saturated with urine, and his pants again soiled.

"His incontinence pants were still securely on him and should have been changed half an hour prior, but obviously had not been changed for quite some time," Ms FA said.

"Despite this observation, the staff did not make any changes to my father's care routine."

Speaking outside the hearings, Ms FA's daughter spoke of how she quickly became so distressed, she seldom visited her grandfather.

"It's really distressing to go and visit and to see the lack of care that is provided," she said.

[An elderly man's dirty and unclipped fingernails.](#)



PHOTO On one occasion the man's family found his fingernails dirty and unclipped.

SUPPLIED: ROYAL COMMISSION INTO AGED CARE

"It's really undignifying, too, to look at somebody who was your grandfather and someone you looked up to ... and something that family members shouldn't have to witness."

## 'Older generation deserves better than this'

Ms FA blamed a lack of training, poor staff-to-resident ratios and limited choice among aged care facilities for her father's experience.

"It is apparent that in this town, and no doubt many other areas in Australia, there is a lack of places available in secure facilities for people with dementia," she said.

She told the commission that after weekly phone calls, her family was eventually able to transfer the man into a different and superior aged care facility, where staff presented notes suggesting her father had been "chemically restrained" at the initial home.

She said he was now closer to his old self, a relaxed, happy man who joked with staff.

"The older generation deserves better than this and my father, who is paying the maximum amount for his care, certainly deserved better," Ms FA said.

"It's unacceptable that an active, physically fit man could enter an aged care facility to be cared for in his last years and within three months be permanently bed-ridden from injuries sustained while unsupervised."

The statement echoed sentiments heard earlier this week, in which commissioners heard [stories of sub-standard care accelerating residents' deaths](#), of [maggot-infested kitchens](#) and of [residents fed for just \\$7 per day](#).

The commissioners were expected to make brief closing remarks about evidence presented in Darwin and Cairns on Wednesday before community sessions are held in Townsville later in the week.

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