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A look at the shocking treatment St Augustine's nursing home resident Colin Taylor. Piece to camera by former St Augusti...

QLD NEWS

Nurses claim cover-ups in aged care homes

NATASHA BITA, The Courier-Mail

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ELDERLY residents have died due to neglect in understaffed nursing homes, Queensland nurses will tell the Royal Commission into aged care abuse.

In explosive allegations, the Nurses Professional Association of Queensland (NPAQ) will tell the inquiry that an elderly woman choked to death on her food because there were not enough staff to help her sit upright.

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“I was scared, because she had a history of attacking people, and it took me two months before I could even wash her feet in a bucket.

“By the time I left (working at the home), she'd stand in the lounge naked and birdbath herself out of a bucket.”

A spokesman for the home, which cannot be named for legal reasons, denied the woman had been left unbathed for two years.

“There are some really difficult circumstances and residents have from time to time needed assistance for showers and sometimes they do become objectionable to that,” he said.

“We've been providing good quality care to residents.”



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“She was an overweight patient ... there wasn’t enough staff to help her to sit up properly,” the nurse told the NPAQ, which is using the nurses’ claims in a submission to the Royal Commission.

The nurse said some residents were left alone on the toilet for up to 45 minutes, and overworked staff who had to help feeble residents eat their meals “would either shove it in their mouths, or just give up”.

A spokeswoman for the nursing home said it took the allegations “very seriously and we are investigating as a priority”.

“The safety and welfare of our residents is always our first concern,” she said.

A north Queensland nurse will allege that an elderly woman died after falling over in the night and suffering multiple fractures.

In a report to be submitted to the Royal Commission, she will claim that residents’ alarms were turned off or unplugged at least twice a week, because staff were too busy to answer the distress calls.

A spokesman for the nursing home confirmed to *The Sunday-Mail* that a resident had died after a fall, but said the [Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission](#) had “found that staffing levels were not a contributing factor”.

He denied that call bells had ever been turned off.

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📷 Dianne Bradeley claims incident reports she made would 'disappear'. Picture: Jamie Hanson

NPAQ researcher Dianne Bradeley, who worked in aged care for nine years, yesterday said she had completed incident reports alleging physical assault, neglect and fraudulent entries or cover-ups in official documents.

“Incident reports simply ‘disappear’ and workers are bullied or managed out of the system,” she told The Sunday Mail.

“A culture of cover-ups persists with problems and mistakes routinely swept under the carpet.”

A nurse at a large Brisbane aged care home will tell the Royal Commission that she was the only nurse onsite, so “while dealing with a resident with a compound fracture she had to neglect another suffering an active heart attack”.

A Sunshine Coast nurse will allege that an elderly man with sexual problems would enter other residents’ rooms at night and masturbate, but “management lied to his family to cover this up”.

