

Media Release

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Sheed demands aged care support for region

Independent Member for the Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed has demanded the Federal Government audits aged care facilities in her electorate and establish the levels of preparedness in the event of a coronavirus outbreak.

“I’ve consulted widely with our aged care sector and I am not at all happy about what I’m hearing,” Ms Sheed said.

“Staffing is a critical issue. We could not fill all our local health positions before the pandemic and this situation has been greatly exacerbated by both the virus and the restriction measures.”

Many aged care facilities in the Shepparton District share staff and there exists little in the way of a reserve should a site’s workforce be required to isolate, according to Ms Sheed.

“We have more than 20 staff in isolation and any further losses in this skilled workforce will be felt across the region.”

The number of duty nurses in facilities has also reduced over the last decade placing extra pressure on the wider health system, according to Ms Sheed.

“We have an already stressed sector and as the tragic pattern in Melbourne and wider Australia has shown, once the virus gets into an aged care home the results are quickly tragic. We have seen four consecutive days of record deaths in Victoria with many of those deaths coming from aged care,” she said.

“I have contacted the Federal Minister for Aged Care Richard Colbeck and warned him in no uncertain terms of the perilous situation here in my electorate. I have asked that the minister audit our region as a matter of urgency and appoint a co-ordinator to oversee the task.

“Should an outbreak occur and our aged care sector buckle under the pressure as it has elsewhere, the Federal Government will have been well warned.

“These are some of the most vulnerable members of our community and I must speak up for them.”

ENDS

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