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MEDIA RELEASE

ACHS's response to Grattan Institute Report

For 43 years, the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS) has supported health services across the country to continuously improve the quality and safety of health care services and deliver optimal outcomes for patients.

The Council believes the Grattan Institute Report 'Safer Care Saves Money' fails to appreciate the very nature of the standards and accreditation process and acknowledge the significant work that has been undertaken over many years by health professionals dedicated to continuous quality improvement.

ACHS CEO Dr Christine Dennis stated that the Council is very much aware of the limitations of accreditation systems. "However, being surveyed by experienced and well-trained assessors, *independent of the surveyed organisation*, who will evaluate the organisation for compliance with rigorous, evidence-based standards, ensures that the infrastructure, medical, nursing and support staff are in place; that there are policies and procedures to guide care and, systems to monitor outcomes," she said.

"To state the current system has failed and is a waste of time is postulating a subjective opinion rather than using empirical evidence," Dr Dennis said. 'There is no doubt a variety of views exist about benefits or otherwise of accreditation in relation to driving safety performance and preventing a *'Bundaberg or Bankstown-Lidcombe'* however, as the Grattan Institute report states "*even the best systems cannot entirely eliminate such catastrophic outcomes*".

"Accreditation is essentially a snapshot in time of what is continually taking place. We totally support that organisations should not merely try to satisfy a one-time exposure but that standards and improvement is a continual process whereby the health service is looking to ensure that their operations meet accreditation requirements on an ongoing basis, and remain in compliance with standards of care that every person using our health system should expect as a minimum."

The Council is proud to have worked collaboratively for more than two years with health services in Queensland to implement short notice accreditation surveys. The outcomes achieved to date will be shared at the 2018 World Hospital Congress in Brisbane (October 2018).

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