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UnitingCare Australia welcomes action in aged care, social services in first sitting week of 47th Parliament

UnitingCare Australia welcomes the Albanese Labor Government's actions to abolish the cashless debit card, implement the recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission and legislate 10 days of paid domestic and family violence leave.

"UnitingCare Australia has long campaigned for reform in aged care, justice for First Peoples and actions to tackle economic inequality. It is positive to see progress across these issues in the first sitting days of the 47th Parliament", said National Director, Claerwen Little.

"We welcome the Government's action on aged care reform through two new Bills, as well as their ongoing commitment to fund a pay rise for aged care workers. We are anxious to see that any increase from the Fair Work Commission be implemented as soon as possible.

"The aged care sector is facing an unprecedented lack of staff and using a surge workforce provided by the Australian Defence Force, which can only be a temporary measure.

"The long-term solution to attract more workers to the industry and provide the proper care, respect and dignity to people living in aged care is to raise wages to ensure the industry is attractive to workers here, and from overseas."

Ms Little pointed to visa applications, saying that out of 60,000 permanent visa applications lodged by overseas skilled workers, only 30 were for aged care positions.

"That shows that working in aged care is not just financially difficult for citizens, but no longer a viable option for skilled overseas migrants."

UnitingCare Australia also welcomed legislation to enshrine ten days of paid domestic and family violence leave into the National Employment Standards.

"The lived experience of people experiencing domestic and family violence show that all too often financial concerns prevent them from leaving. This reform is another important lever to ensure all people, especially women, can live freely and without fear.

Ms Little also said that in the face of record inflation figures we cannot afford to lose sight of people facing financial pressure.

"With inflation rates at 6 per cent, the cost of fresh fruit and vegetables has risen by 7 per cent, making decent nutrition further out of reach for low-income earners.

"In our [2022 Australian Election Policy Platform](#) we called for action on economic inequality. We called for an inquiry into stagnant incomes. And we said that cost of living pressures would determine the election outcome.

"As the cost of living crisis continues to worsen and we look ahead to the October Budget, we must ensure that no one is left behind".

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