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UnitingCare Australia calls for a strong recovery for all

"As we start the parliamentary year, UnitingCare Australia calls on all Parliamentarians to remember their responsibility to think of those most in need. As we navigate important policy decisions, it is incumbent upon all members to consider those in our community who most need our support" said National Director, Claerwen Little.

"With the economic recovery ahead of Government expectations, we have an opportunity to ensure that every Australian is part of the comeback.

"That means we must ensure an adequate social safety net, beyond the temporary measures due to end in March. We know that the Coronavirus Supplement has lifted thousands of people out of poverty and allowed them to meet their most basic needs, many for the first time.

"Returning to the old rate of JobSeeker will place additional pressure on those who can least afford it. As the Government actively considers the future of JobSeeker, we urge them to take into account the significant benefits that a permanent increase to the base rate will make in transforming lives and boosting the economy through increased spending" Ms Little said.

"We must also protect individuals and families from harmful lending practices and reject the proposed winding back of Responsible Lending Obligations. This proposal would have dire consequences on people and communities, leading to increased financial hardship and disadvantage.

"As one of the largest networks of aged care providers, we await the highly anticipated release of the Aged Care Royal Commission final report and the Government's response. UnitingCare Australia continues to advocate for measures that ensure every older person is able to live well, as part of their community, with dignity, and in a place of their choosing.

"Justice for our First Peoples remains a vital priority for Australia. We urge the Government to enact policies for First Peoples that support self-determination and lead to tangible and lasting outcomes", said Ms Little.

"Despite the new year, many of the challenges of 2020 still remain. As we continue to rebuild and recover, we must ensure that every person has the opportunity to live with dignity and with hope."

UnitingCare Australia is the national body for the Uniting Church's community services network and an agency of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia. We give voice to the Uniting Church's commitment to social justice through advocacy and by strengthening community service provision. The UnitingCare network is one of the largest networks of community services in Australia, supporting 1.4 million people every year across urban, rural, and remote communities, with over 50,000 staff and 30,000 volunteers.

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