

15 June 2022



UnitingCare Australia welcomes boost for lowest paid workers

UnitingCare Australia welcomes the decision by the Fair Work Commission to increase the national minimum wage, including specific comments from Justice Ross that the lowest paid are particularly vulnerable in the context of rising inflation.

“Even before the current crisis, the lowest paid workers were struggling with the cost of living. Now the cost of buying every day items like fruit and vegetables is having a disproportionate impact on low-income household,” said National Director, Claerwen Little.

In [analysis released during the federal election campaign](#), UnitingCare Australia found that stagnant wages had robbed Australians of between \$270-\$680 per fortnight in lost income over the previous 10 years.

“We acknowledge that the current cost of living crisis is complex and there are no easy solutions. But today’s decision by the Fair Work Commission is a significant step forward. It is a clear recognition that those people earning the least are suffering the most,” said Ms Little.

“Today’s decision is also a step forward in addressing the gender pay gap. 55% of award-reliant workers on minimum wages are women. Award-reliant women earn approximately 10% less per hour than men. And in sectors like aged care, women make up around 85% of the workforce. There is currently a case yet to be determined by the Fair Work Commission for an increase in wages for aged care workers.

“As a country we have a responsibility to ensure that no one is left behind. This includes not just the change to earn a decent wage, but also adequate indexation of Commonwealth funding for the community and aged care sectors to support these critical workers.

“UnitingCare Australia looks forward to working with the Australian Government through sensible but significant solutions to ensure that throughout this crisis, no one is left behind.”

About UnitingCare Australia

UnitingCare Australia is one of the most influential social sector organisations in the country. The UnitingCare Network provides more than \$5 billion in support services to more than 1.4 million Australians every year.

The network employs 50,000 workers, with a further 30,000 volunteers, across 1,600 sites throughout Australia, making it one of the nation’s largest employers.

It provides services to children, young people and families, those with disabilities, older Australians, including residential and community care, child care, homelessness prevention and support, domestic violence and disability services – in urban, rural and remote areas.

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