

## Putting people first: UnitingCare Australia welcomes boost for the most vulnerable

UnitingCare Australia, the national body for the largest community services network, has welcomed the Albanese Labor Government's significant funding for the wellbeing of Australians in the 2023-24 Budget.

"Budgets are about choices and people should be at the heart of those choices. We welcome the Government's commitment to invest in the wellbeing of Australians, especially the most vulnerable," said Claerwen Little, National Director of UnitingCare Australia.

***"As a nation, we must put people first."***

The Budget includes significant funding for aged care, social services and supports, among other priority areas. [UnitingCare Australia's pre-budget submission](#) highlighted the crises in aged care which has left many older Australians struggling and care workers undervalued and underpaid. It also highlighted the struggles of millions of Australians due to wealth inequality, income stagnation, lower than acceptable income support payments and the rising cost of living.

"We acknowledge the modest increase to JobSeeker, however \$40 a fortnight won't end poverty in Australia. This is just a down payment and we look forward to seeing continued increases over future years," Ms Little said.

"The Government has recognized the urgent need to invest in the care sector to ensure that all Australians receive the compassion and dignity they deserve, especially our older loved ones and we welcome the extension of time to implement the Support At Home program. After more than a year of advocacy, the aged care wage increase is a major win for workers and their families, and recognises the vital role of carers in our community.

"But we are concerned about the sustainability of the aged care sector, including our workforce, and look forward to the work of the Sustainability Taskforce announced tonight. It is vital we maintain this positive momentum and ambition for aged care.

"This is a really welcomed first step in our journey in working toward a fairer Australia."

### **About UnitingCare Australia**

[UnitingCare Australia](#) is the national body for the Uniting Church's community services, the largest social services network in Australia. The UnitingCare network supports 1.4 million people every year across 1,600 sites in urban, rural, and remote communities, with over 50,000 staff and 30,000 volunteers. It is the largest network of not-for-profit aged care providers nationally, supporting 97,000 older people, comprising 8.5% of total residential beds and 10% of Home Care Packages nationally. Over 80% of our workforce and 60% of our services recipients are women.