

## UnitingCare Australia welcomes investments in care and cost-of-living but warns urgent funding gaps remain

Australia's largest community services network says tonight's federal budget delivers some welcome relief but falls short in critical areas, leaving the most vulnerable Australians behind.

"Ahead of the budget, we called on the Government to prioritise policies that improve the wellbeing of those who need it most. We called for action to strengthen the social safety net and ensure a successful transition to the new aged care system," said UnitingCare Australia National Director, Claerwen Little.

---

*"We welcome cost-of-living measures that will make a difference. However, tonight, the safety net just got a little more unravelled. In fact, our social safety net now has gaping holes."*

---

"We are disappointed that there is no material increase to the base rates of income support for the poorest people in our community. Despite the evidence that shows beyond a doubt that this will lift people out of poverty and allow them dignity and respect, the Government has not acted.

"At some point, a Government needs to be bold and actually raise the rate. At some point—we were hoping that in a cost-of-living crisis, this may be that point. We will campaign on this at the election and urge the next Parliament to make it a priority."

UnitingCare Australia's [Pre-Budget Submission](#) called for a comprehensive investment in the nation's care infrastructure, including increased funding for social services, fairer income support payments, and sustainable aged care funding.

UnitingCare Australia represents the largest not-for-profit network of aged care providers across the country, supporting 102,000 older people and comprising 8% of residential beds and 8.5% of Home Care Packages nationally.

“As one of the biggest drivers of aged care reform, we remain deeply committed to its success,” Ms Little said.

“We are so close to the start of a new era in aged care, and we must ensure everyone is ready for the transition.

“Our greatest concern is for older Australians without means and ensuring they continue to access quality care when they need it.

“The providers in the UnitingCare network are working hard through this transition—and all the building blocks need to be in place from day one to continue delivering quality services.

“We continue to work closely with the Government to ensure that this transition is a success. It cannot fail, and it cannot fail older people,” said Ms Little.

“Overall, tonight’s Budget takes some positive steps, but more is needed to build a truly fair and resilient Australia.”

#### **About UnitingCare Australia**

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 service provision.

The UnitingCare Network is the largest network of social service and aged care providers in Australia, delivering 5.8 million interactions annually across 1,600 service locations in urban, rural and remote communities, with over 55,000 staff and 17,000 volunteers. Over 80% of our workforce and 60% of our service recipients are women.

Media contact – Anna Page, 0432 560 975, [annap@nat.unitingcare.org.au](mailto:annap@nat.unitingcare.org.au)