

UnitingCare Australia welcomes Government action to bolster emergency relief and financial counselling

UnitingCare Australia, alongside Anglicare Australia, The Salvation Army and the St Vincent de Paul Society National Council, welcomes the Government's \$11.7 million investment in emergency relief and financial counselling services, recognising the growing pressure on communities as cost-of-living pressures intensify.

"We commend the Government for listening and responding to our call to support people doing it toughest and the frontline services holding communities together during a deeply challenging time," said Tamara Thomas, National Director of UnitingCare Australia.

Demand for emergency relief has surged, with services across the UnitingCare network reporting increases of up to 35 per cent as households struggle to afford everyday essentials. Many people seeking help are doing so for the first time, including dual-income families. The additional \$9.5 million for emergency relief will provide critical support, particularly in rural and remote communities affected by recent events such as Tropical Cyclone Narelle.

Financial counselling services have also seen demand rise by up to 25 per cent as people attempt to manage mounting financial pressures. The \$2.24 million investment in Financial Wellbeing Hubs across high-needs and disaster-prone areas will help ensure those most at risk are not left behind.

"Rising fuel costs are pushing already stretched households past breaking point, and our providers of emergency relief and financial counselling services are absorbing that pressure every day," Ms Thomas said.

As fuel volatility and scarcity continues to unfold, UnitingCare Australia sees this funding as a vital step in the Government's broader response as it works through its plan to keep Australia moving. This timely support will make a significant difference to thousands of families and individuals most in need.

"Emergency relief and financial counselling are a critical safety net," Ms Thomas said. "As cost-of-living pressures continue, our government must keep acting — not only to stabilise services now, but to support people earlier and prevent hardship from escalating."

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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. Through advocacy and by strengthening service provision, UnitingCare Australia gives voice to the Uniting Church's commitment to social justice.

The UnitingCare Network is the largest network of social service 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.

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