Friday 2 September 2022

JOBS SUMMIT –TWO OF THE LARGEST FAITH-BASED AGED CARE NETWORKS PUSH FOR PERSONAL CARE WORKERS TO BE ADDED TO MIGRATION LIST

Catholic Health Australia, Uniting NSW.ACT and UnitingCare Australia are using the second day of the Jobs & Skills Summit to call for the addition of personal care workers to the skilled migration occupation list as an immediate way of plugging the gap in the aged care workforce.

A CHA study found there was almost 60,000 vacancies in the aged care sector alone, of which 45,000 are qualified aged care workers.

Peak advocacy body CHA represents Catholic not for profit aged care providers while Uniting NSW.ACT is one of the largest providers of aged care in the country and are both attending the Jobs & Skills summit. Uniting NSW.ACT is part of the UnitingCare Network, the largest network of not-for-profit aged care providers nationally.

They are appealing to Immigration Minister Andrew Giles and making the case to delegates at today's Jobs & Skills Summit which they are attending as representatives of the care sector.

The addition of a new classification to the skilled migration list is at the top of the list of CHA's five-point plan and is one that could be done immediately they say.

CHA CEO Pat Garcia said: "Adding personal care workers to the skilled migration list could really help plug the gap in the aged care workforce. When there are almost 60,000 vacancies in aged care right now this is something that Government can do and do it quickly.

"There is no doubt that we have more work to do to attract and retain our domestic aged care workers but bringing in workers from countries that have an existing relationship with Australia will help alleviate what is a workforce crisis."

Uniting NSW.ACT Director of Seniors Services, Saviour Buhagiar, said: "Skilled migration of personal care workers must sit alongside fully funded increases to pay and improvement in training, plus fast tracking of nurse migration to address the immediate crisis."

"The workforce crisis in aged care is very real. We have 10% vacancy rates across our operations, about 1000 of them in aged care. After the work our people have done during the pandemic to keep seniors safe, we cannot keep asking them to work double shifts and struggle to fill rosters. We need the boost to our workforce that including personal care workers in the migration list will deliver".

Notes to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services accounting for approximately 10 per cent of hospital-based healthcare in Australia. Our members also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, 5 percent of public hospital care, 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.

UnitingCare Australia is national body for the Uniting Church's community services network. The UnitingCare Aged Care Network is the largest not-for-profit aged care network, representing 9% of the total aged care sector.

Uniting NSW.ACT operates 70 residential aged care homes in 55 locations across NSW and ACT which offer care and support for older people from our dedicated team of nearly 5000 residential aged care staff, 24-hours a day, so residents can live the most active and fulfilled life possible. Our Inspired Care framework honours a resident's desire to express who they are, make their own decisions about the support they receive and contribute as a member of the community. We are also an approved provider for Commonwealth Home Support Program and Home Care packages and have close to 9000 clients who use our home care services, and we offer a wide range of personalised services to help our clients, delivered by more than 1000 home care staff, in and out of people's homes.

Media contact: CHA Julian Lee 0422 343 086 **Uniting** NSW.ACT Bronwen Reed 0481 056 714