

UnitingCare Australia applauds ambition for aged care and focus on older Australians

UnitingCare Australia, representing the largest social services and aged care provider network in the country, welcomes today's announcement from Aged Care Minister Anika Wells about the formation of a Financial Sustainability Taskforce.

"UnitingCare Australia shares the Minister's ambition for aged care, that is no question. But more importantly we welcome the Government's commitment to ensure that people are front and centre of our future aged care system," said National Director, Claerwen Little.

"Older Australians and their families, aged care workers, and the dedicated providers who deliver services in partnership with the government are all valued stakeholders.

"We are pleased to see the new roadmap and the sequencing of reforms. We have long called for a rights based approach to aged care and look forward to seeing this as a key focus of the new Aged Care Act.

"This is a significant step towards a fair and equitable aged care system, but we must turn ambition into action. Those who can afford to pay more, should pay more, but we must ensure everyone has access to high quality care regardless of means."

"We believe all people should experience compassion and dignity as they age, and exercise their rights as fully participating members of society – and our aged care system must enable that," Ms Little said. ,

With more than 4.1 million Australians, or nearly 16% of the population, currently over the age of 65 - a figure projected to rise to 22% by 2057 and to one in four Australians by 2097 - it's clear that the need for effective, compassionate aged care will continue to grow.

Despite the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety's revelation of the current 4.2 working-age individuals for every Australian aged 65 years or over, projections suggest this will fall to just 3.1 by 2058. The current funding arrangements are insufficient to meet the forthcoming challenges.

"All Australians are currently paying the cost of inadequate and inefficient funding. This is a significant step towards a fair and equitable aged care system and we look forward to being part of this crucial national conversation" said Ms Little.

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.

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Claerwen Little is available for interviews today in Canberra