



## **Government delays aged care reforms in budget at its peril**

### **Catholic Health Australia**

The federal government's decision to delay its essential aged care reforms in this budget threatens access to quality and dignified care for older Australians today and for the future, said Catholic Health Australia.

The peak body, representing 350 Catholic not-for-profit aged care facilities, said the government is failing to implement the recommendations of the Aged Care Taskforce.

"It's been six months since the Aged Care Taskforce delivered its recommendations and the government has not even responded to them," said CHA Director of Aged Care Policy, Laura Haylen.

"The decision to neglect the Aged Care Taskforce recommendations in this budget is incredibly disappointing and frustrating.

"With most facilities operating at a loss and many at risk of closure, we are running out of time to secure quality and sustainable aged care for our loved ones.

"Every day adds more to the cost of fixing the system, and leaves more older Australians languishing in our hospitals for lack of quality care options in their community. There is no excuse for delay."

The Aged Care Taskforce, made up of consumers, providers and independent experts, recommended greater personal contributions to create better and more sustainable aged care, while retaining a safety net to ensure no-one misses out.

“Communities, particularly those in regional and rural Australia, urgently need additional funding to upgrade existing facilities and invest in improved care models to look after Australia’s growing ageing population,” said Ms Haylen.

“Asking residents who can afford it to contribute more towards their living expenses - costs they have paid their whole adult lives - is the fairest way to deliver this extra funding.”

CHA also supports the government’s commitment to fund wage rises of between 6.8 per cent and 28.5 per cent which were ordered by the Fair Work Commission in March.

“These wage rises are urgently needed so aged care providers can attract and retain hardworking and dedicated staff,” said Ms Haylen.

CHA also supports the government’s decision to defer the commencement of the new Aged Care Act to 1 July 2025 to provide much needed time to get the Act right.

The short term injection of funding to address waitlists for home care packages is welcome but much more is needed to ensure older people can continue to live at home.

*Catholic Health Australia represents more than 350 aged care facilities, or 12 per cent of all aged care facilities across Australia. This includes more than 27,000 residential aged care beds and around 20 per cent of home care and support services for the elderly.*