



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **AGED CARE CRISIS MEANS GOV MUST FIRE BOTH BARRELS: BACK PAY RISE & REMOVE BARRIERS TO IMMIGRATION**

The peak advisory body for Catholic aged care homes is urgently calling on the Australian Government to address the aged care labour shortage by supporting a wage rise and making it easier for employers to source workers from overseas.

Catholic Health Australia represents the largest non-government grouping of aged care homes in Australia providing around 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.

CHA chief executive Pat Garcia said: "The extreme shortage of aged care workers is putting the viability of homes across the country at risk, especially in regional areas.

"The federal government has two massive levers it can pull right now to help alleviate the crisis. Firstly, it can advise the Fair Work Commission to significantly boost aged care wages. Secondly, it can put personal care and nursing support workers on the priority skills list for immigration.

"I honestly don't understand why either of these actions has been delayed to date, given the seriousness of the staffing crisis in aged care. We have seen several homes closing in the past month and I know we will see more following soon if we don't get access to workers.

"Aged care workers are in high global demand so it would also help enormously if the government were to help make Australia a more attractive option by establishing easy pathways to permanent residency.

"The government could also make it simpler for employers to seize opportunities to import workers by removing visa application fees for aged care providers in the regions and issuing a moratorium on the requirement for labour market testing.

"We need workers from overseas to plug the immediate hole in our system and we need higher wages to ensure there's a healthy pipeline of labour domestically into aged care where we know demand is going to rise sharply.

"Aged care policy is complex and there are no silver bullets – but you do need to fire the ammunition you have."