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BUDGET – A WELCOME DOWN PAYMENT ON FUTURE AGED CARE REFORM

Australia's not-for-profit Catholic aged care providers saw many positives in a Budget that outlined the funding and priorities of the Albanese Government.

Peak advisory body Catholic Health Australia says the Budget's \$3.9bn in additional aged care investment was a down payment on future aged care reforms and the election commitments of the Albanese government.

Central to this was the promise of the Treasurer to fund an increase in aged care workers' wages in future Budgets, which will be a welcome relief to a sector struggling with workforce shortages and COVID-related fatigue.

CHA Aged Care Director Jason Kara said: "Tonight's Budget included a recommitment of the Government to fund the future Fair Work Commission pay decision in full.

"This changes the negative narrative for the aged care sector and is the first step to improved attraction and retention of aged care staff as we begin to recognise their value in their take-home pay."

The Budget contained the following:

- \$2.5 billion over 4 years to support transition to new 24/7 registered nurse and care minute requirements;
- \$48.6 million to establish Aged Care Complaints Commissioner and the Inspector-General of Aged Care, recommendations from the Royal Commission to improve transparency and systemic issues within aged care
- \$312.6m for improving aged care ICT and better information for consumers

The ongoing seriousness of COVID19 was recognised with \$844.7m to cover additional costs incurred by aged care providers in outbreaks funding. Supplies to Rapid Antigen Tests and PPE was also funded.

Mr Kara added: "We will continue to work with the Albanese Government and Aged Care Minister Anika Wells to deliver real improvements for aged care residents and an ageing population.

"There is no doubt that these aged care reforms will be very expensive, and we will be monitoring their impact closely. We look forward to seeing real investment in the next Budget supported by genuine collaboration moving forward."



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.