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## **CATHOLIC HEALTH AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS FAIR PAY FOR AGED CARE WORKERS NOW**

Catholic Health Australia says the Commonwealth Government's decision to postpone desperately-needed wage increases into the near future is a bitter pill for aged care workers to swallow.

In its submission to the Fair Work Commission the Government has rejected paying the urgently needed 15% interim wage increase immediately, instead proposing delaying this by months and years with 10% paid in July 2023 and 5% in July 2024.

CHA, the peak advocacy body for Catholic not-for-profit aged care facilities, says it is critical that aged care workers receive a boost to their wages as soon as possible to ensure a stable and skilled workforce that delivers high quality care to older Australians.

CHA's Aged Care Director Jason Kara said that the primary reason the sector has difficulty attracting and retaining well-skilled people was due to low wages and that this is only getting worse with cost-of-living pressures.

"Both the Royal Commission and the Fair Work Commission have accepted aged care workers are underpaid and that this is a key reason we are experiencing a crisis in recruiting and retaining staff.

"The government recently welcomed the Fair Work Commission's interim pay decision as desperately needed and thoroughly deserved but now it has been delayed, we want to know why?"

"This is a really bitter pill for aged care workers to swallow right before Christmas and is a real disappointment for our members and their hard-working staff."

CHA supports the calls of unions, consumer groups and other provider peaks for the government to support not just the 15% interim pay decision for direct care workers, but the full 25% pay increase for all aged care workers and for it to be paid as soon as possible.

Mr Kara said that the feeling of optimism that came with a new government was fading as the sector remains stuck in crisis and perpetual reform.

"The government bought a lot of goodwill with its promise to fund the aged care wage case but now is the time to pay the bill," he said.

"There is nothing standing between pay equity for aged care workers but government support."

**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.