



**Media Release
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COMMUNITY SECTOR AWAITS FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA'S FINAL DECISION

UnitingCare Australia said Fair Work Australia's decision today to extend its inquiry into community sector wages was a bit of an anticlimax.

National Director, Lin Hatfield Dodds said, as Fair Work Australia gathers more evidence, UnitingCare services will be keen to ensure staff are paid adequately for the essential work they do.

"With additional submissions due by August this year, the sector expects an outcome by Christmas," Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

"But regardless of further processes, UnitingCare Australia's position is unchanged. Funding the claim must not come at the expense of vital social services.

"A significant proportion of our services are government funded. Funding arrangements must reflect any increased cost of delivering services.

"Our modelling shows that our network spends around 53 per cent of its total expenses on wages which is significantly higher than the Australian industry average.

"UnitingCare employs 35,000 staff nationally or one in seven community sector workers.

"Around 25 per cent of those 35,000 employees will be affected by the outcome of the Australian Services Union wage claim.

"Approximately 60 per cent of funding for those staff comes from state and territory governments. Twenty four per cent is federally funded. The rest is self funded.

"UnitingCare Australia fully supports improved remuneration for low paid community sector workers and we will be looking to governments across the board to fully fund the outcomes of this historic pay claim.

"We are looking to the Australian Government to provide strong leadership to the states and territories on this issue.

"UnitingCare Australia has committed to working with the Federal Government Consultation Group to ensure we can deliver the pay rise without cutting vital social services.

"As a nation we should not have to choose between adequate services for disadvantaged Australians and equitable pay for the people who work to provide those services," Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

The UnitingCare network provides social services to over 2 million people each year in 1,300 sites in remote, rural and metropolitan Australia. UnitingCare has 35,000 staff and 24,000 volunteers.

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