



**Media Release
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AN AGED CARE SYSTEM FOR THE FUTURE

UnitingCare Australia welcomes the Government's decision to outline its blueprint for aged care reform tomorrow ahead of the May Federal Budget.

National Director, Lin Hatfield Dodds said she anticipates major reform in tomorrow's announcement.

"We'll be looking for a detailed plan for structural change and a timetable for funding," Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

"UnitingCare Australia is one of a number of organisations dedicated to ensuring older Australians get the care they need when and where they need it.

"We have been central to the discussions in the lead up to this long awaited announcement.

"People should be required to contribute to the cost of their care, but services must be available according to individual need, and not determined by a person's ability to pay. People should be able to use the equity in their home," Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

Successful reforms will deliver:

- An entitlement to care
- Delivery of quality care to every older person regardless of where they live, their needs, or their capacity to pay
- An increase in the supply of care and support services
- Easy access to the system
- An easy pathway through the system as needs change
- More flexible service delivery
- Increased resources for the workforce
- An independent mechanism for determining the cost of care
- A solution to the gap between the cost of services and the funding provided

The reforms must:

- Remove the distinction between high care and low care places
- Top up the funding for concessional places
- Simplify regulation and improve quality by moving this responsibility from the Department of Health and Ageing to an independent Australian Aged Care Commission
- Provide a gateway for people seeking support that provides information; needs assessment and entitlement to care and support services; care coordination and carer referral services; delivered via a regional network

"In addition, we are calling for an implementation group supported by the major parties including representatives from federal, state and territory governments and the non government sector to oversee the roll out of the reforms," Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

UnitingCare services manage 12 per cent of all residential aged care places in Australia with over 12,000 aged care beds and a network of community care places from metropolitan to remote communities.

Lin Hatfield Dodds will be available for comment tomorrow following the Government's announcement.

Contact: Lin Hatfield Dodds 02 6249 6717 0408 402 222 / Judith Tokley 0408 824 306