

UnitingCare Australia Welcomes Moves for Closer Examination of Aged Care Funding Instrument

UnitingCare Australia welcomes moves today by Greens Senator Rachel Siewert to refer proposed changes to the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI) announced in the mid-year economic and fiscal review and 2016-17 Federal Budget to a Senate Committee.

Chair of the UnitingCare Aged Care Network, Steve Teulan, said the move is a sensible one in the interests of some of Australia's most sick and vulnerable older people.

"The proposed changes to the funding instrument are directly targeted at the most complex areas of health care for aged care residents and will seriously impact aged care providers' ability to meet critical health needs such as wound and skin care, mobility, arthritis treatment and end of life care," he said.

The funding cuts would, on average, reduce the amount of funding available to meet each resident's needs by 11% or \$6,655, and as much as \$18,000, per resident each year.

"The changes will put increased pressure on the public hospital system if the viability of residential aged care service providers is threatened and they are unable to invest in the additional services that will be required to meet the care needs of growing numbers of older Australians.

"We are also very concerned about the disproportionate impact on services in rural and regional Australia as our modelling shows that services in these areas will be even more severely affected.

"We understand the need to manage growth in health and aged care expenditure, but it needs to be done in a way that doesn't jeopardise the health of the most vulnerable people in our community.

"UnitingCare Australia wants the Parliament to work co-operatively, and with the aged care sector, to find a more sustainable way of meeting the growing needs of Australia's ageing population into the future," Mr Teulan said.

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