MEDIA RELEASE
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UnitingCare Australia welcomes new support for people with severe symptoms of dementia

The Government’s announcement of $54.4 million in funding that will go over four years to a new initiative to support people with severe symptoms of dementia in residential care facilities is very good news,” said Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director of UnitingCare Australia.

“Our agencies provide the largest share of aged care in the country and we are consistently hearing that the challenges of caring for people with dementia are growing. Additional support to assist residential care providers in meeting this challenge is most welcome.”

Approximately 1 in 4 people aged 85 and over have dementia. With an ageing population it is expected that by 2050 nearly 900,000 Australians will be living with dementia. At the moment, more than half the permanent residents in Government-funded aged care facilities around the country have been diagnosed with dementia.

"This is a growing challenge and the Government is right to be trialling a new initiative to improve our capacity to care for this vulnerable group of people. It is a positive step forward both for the people who need specialised care and for the services doing their best to provide that care with limited resources," said Lin Hatfield Dodds.

"The Government has clearly heard and understood the concerns raised at the Dementia Forum. We are pleased that the Government has worked with the aged care sector to find solutions, and has continued to invest the $54.4 million specifically into this area."

"We also welcome the Government’s announcement that they will conduct a more comprehensive review of existing dementia programmes. Today’s initiative is an important first step, but with the challenge of caring for people with severe symptoms of dementia growing, continued attention will be needed. We welcome the review and encourage the Government to give focus to this issue. We hope Australia can become a world leader in caring for people with dementia,” said Lin Hatfield Dodds.

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UnitingCare Australia, an agency of the Uniting Church, represents one of the largest networks of social service providers in Australia, with a network that employs 39,000 staff, supported by 28,000 volunteers, operating nationally across 1,600 sites in remote, regional, rural and urban Australia.

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