

AGED CARE SHORT-CHANGED IN BUDGET WEEK

This Federal Budget was the opportunity to finally recognise the issues across the aged care sector and address them by announcing meaningful funding and policy measures. Instead, aged care has been neglected again, the Health Services Union (HSU) National Secretary, Lloyd Williams said.

“The Morrison Government’s Budget announcements failed to deliver the desperately needed investment into aged care,” Mr Williams said.

“The aged care measures they did announce were piecemeal, recycled and completely inadequate.

“If human tragedy of the scale that COVID-19 has brought to aged care cannot kick this government into gear, what will?

“The funding of an additional 23,000 home care packages over four years doesn’t come close to addressing the need when you consider that 28,000 older Australians died waiting for a home package in the past two years, and more than 100,000 remain on the waitlist.”

Mr Williams said a major concern for the HSU is that funding announcements have not been underpinned with any strengthening to the transparency framework, leaving older Australians and the aged care workforce to wonder where the money really ends up.

“Reform to the system must be accompanied by improved provider accreditation, compliance and reporting requirements and yet, none of these critical needs have been raised or addressed by the Budget,” he said.

“We welcome funding when it is provided however, we’re still waiting for the Morrison Government to get serious about financial transparency and accountability in the sector. They’ve once again demonstrated they have no interest in making sure taxpayer money equates to better care”

The Budget also presented an opportunity to invest in health and social care jobs and make them a core part of a serious economic recovery plan.

“Instead, the Government overlooked these essential workers and growing employment sectors.”

Mr Williams said the Opposition’s Budget reply also fell short of presenting a plan for real change in aged care.

“Both sides of Government have made it clear that they will wait until the final Aged Care Royal Commission report comes out next year,” he said.

“But aged care is in a crisis now and needs funding commitments now.

“We are still in a pandemic and the inadequacies of the system are putting aged care workers and the people they care for at serious risk.”

“We cannot continue to short-change aged care workers, older Australians, and their loved ones.”

ENDS

View the HSU’s list of aged care demands: <https://www.changeagedcare.org/>

HSU National Secretary Lloyd Williams is available for further comments.

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About the HSU | The Health Services Union (HSU) is a growing member-based union with over 90,000 members working across the health, aged care and disability sectors in every state and territory of Australia.

