



**Joint statement: 1 February, 2022.**

## **Staff shortage emergency requires more than a two-payment bonus.**

We acknowledge the announcement of a retention bonus to be paid to aged care workers in two stages.

However, the announcement still does not address our call last month for additional payments to workers under enormous strain working to protect older vulnerable people during the COVID Omicron surge.

Aged care providers and unions are resolute in their call on the Prime Minister to do more than a two-payment bonus for overwhelmed aged care workers at nursing homes, and those delivering services out in the community right across the country.

The recent announcement of two pro rata payments of up to \$400 is grossly inadequate and it remains to be seen how this short-term payment will prevent a feared exodus of staff from the frontline.

The escalating crisis in aged care due to the Omicron surge has left aged care workers experiencing extraordinary levels of worker stress as they do their very best to meet residents' needs, while being dangerously understaffed, working double shifts and endure long hours in personal protective equipment.

Aged care staff are exhausted and burnt out, with many working for days around the clock. Resignations due to fatigue and feeling undervalued continue to devastate the sector. We need an ongoing Covid-19 payment to be paid on each shift to recognise and incentivise aged care workers.

The Covid pandemic is magnifying the structural deficiencies in the aged care system identified by the Royal Commission. We need action from the federal government to make sure that aged care workers and services are resourced and enabled better care for and protect older Australians. This means having a plan for more staff, with better pay and improved skills and qualifications. Alongside adequate funding for services to maintain infection protection measures to keep people safe.

Aged care staff are working hard to provide care in very challenging circumstances and with limited resources. They are on the frontline of the fight against Covid, caring for the most

vulnerable in our society. A largely female dominated workforce, they must be appropriately recognised and supported to win this fight.

### Union spokespersons and media contacts

<p>Michele O’Neil President <b>Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)</b></p> <p>Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200</p>	<p>Annie Butler Federal Secretary <b>Australian Nursing &amp; Midwifery Federation (ANMF)</b></p> <p>Media contact: Richard Lenarduzzi 0411 254 390</p>
<p>Gerard Hayes National President <b>Health Services Union (HSU)</b></p> <p>Media contact: 0417 275 821</p>	<p>Carolyn Smith National Director Aged Care <b>United Workers Union (UWU)</b></p> <p>Media contact: 1300 898 633</p>
<p>Mark Raguse Queensland Executive Officer <b>Australian Workers Union (AWU)</b></p> <p>Media contact: 0400 338 721</p>	

### Australian Aged Care Collaboration (AACC) spokespersons and media contacts

The AACC is a group of six aged care peak bodies: Aged & Community Services Australia (ACSA), Anglicare Australia, Baptist Care Australia, Catholic Health Australia, Leading Age Services Australia (LASA) and UnitingCare Australia. Together, the AACC represents more than 1,000 organisations who deliver 70 per cent of aged care services to 1.3 million Australians, either in their own homes or in communal residential settings.

<p>Paul Sadler CEO Aged &amp; Community Services Australia (ACSA)</p> <p>Media contact: Jane Garcia 0455 111 593</p>	<p>Sean Rooney CEO Leading Age Services Australia (LASA)</p> <p>Media contact: Kate Hannon 08 6311 7809</p>
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