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**AUSTRALIAN NURSING AND MIDWIFERY FEDERATION**

**BUDGET A 'MISSED OPPORTUNITY' TO SUPPORT AGED CARE NURSES AND CARE STAFF**

The country's largest union, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF), says last night's self-professed 'back in black' Budget, is a missed opportunity by the Morrison Government to provide safe, quality care for older Australians and fails to support the work of the nurses and carers who could make an actual difference.

ANMF Federal Secretary Annie Butler said the \$21.6 billion for the aged care sector provides a patchwork of fragmented solutions but does not address the core issues underlying the widespread and systemic failures that have occurred across the sector and which are now being brought to light through the Royal Commission.

"The Government has made promises to support older Australians, invest in health and ensure essential services with this Budget, but has chosen to focus on tax cuts and a forecast surplus, which may or may not be delivered, instead of implementing measures which will actually turn those promises into reality," Ms Butler said.

"The Budget has failed to direct health funding to those areas where it is urgently needed to alleviate the critical pressures being felt across the acute health system. And crucially, there is no genuine support to assist the nursing and midwifery workforce working in this system.

"Most critically of all there is no funding, no plan and no guarantee that this Budget will lead to improvements in quality and safety in aged care and there is definitely no support for the aged care workforce which is currently, under enormous pressure, just managing to hold the system together.

"The Government has once again failed to introduce legislative changes to ensure mandatory minimum staffing levels and hours of care for all residents, or to fund wage increases for nurses and carers to help build a quality workforce.

"This Budget is yet another missed opportunity for the Government to address the crisis in aged care by delivering crucial funding for additional staffing and guaranteeing that the generous taxpayer funded subsidies paid to providers are tied to direct care for residents.

"We believe that large, for-profit providers who continue to pay little or no tax, whilst taking advantage of their taxpayer-funded subsidies, should also come to the attention of the Government's renewed crackdown on tax avoidance as announced in the Budget.

“There is little for nurses, midwives and carers to celebrate in this Budget, we only hope that the federal election will provide an opportunity for all sides of politics to genuinely recognise the value of their contribution to our society.”

***Authorised by Annie Butler, ANMF Federal Secretary. 1/365 Queen St, Melbourne.***

**The ANMF, with over 275,000 members, is the industrial and professional voice for nurses, midwives and assistants in nursing in Australia.**

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