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## **LASA urges Vic Premier to fund Bush Nursing Centres**

Leading Age Services Australia Limited (LASA), the voice of aged care, has called on the Victorian Government to commit to further funding the state's Bush Nursing Centres (BNCs).

LASA, which represents Victoria's 15 community-based, not-for-profit Bush Nursing Centres, has written to the Premier, Daniel Andrews, seeking a commitment to further fund the Centres to ensure their ongoing viability and sustainability.

LASA Chief Executive Officer Sean Rooney said the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) had been unable to fund the sector to the level required to ensure their ongoing viability and sustainability.

Mr Rooney said the current estimated funding shortfall for the BNC Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) was \$678,000 over the life of the agreement.

In addition to the EBA funding, LASA is seeking a commitment to undertake a full review of the role and function of the BNCs to determine both the capital and recurrent funding they really need to be sustainable over the longer term. This should include a full cost of care study.

"It is vital for rural and remote communities that these centres can pay their nursing staff appropriately and ensure they can compete on an even playing field in recruiting and retaining an appropriate and skilled nursing workforce," Mr Rooney said.

"It is also vital that these Centres have a viable and sustainable funding base on top of being able to pay their nursing staff appropriately.

"The Bush Nursing Centres have been an essential part of the Victorian Health System for more than 100 years."

The Liberal National Party Opposition has promised that if elected they would provide \$300,000 in emergency funding over two years to make sure nurses and support staff at the Centres can continue to deliver essential primary and emergency health services.

They further committed to undertaking a review of the BNCs to ensure they receive the appropriate level of funding over the longer term.

## **About Leading Age Services Australia (LASA)**

LASA is the national peak body representing and supporting providers of age services across residential care, home care and retirement living. Our purpose is to enable a high performing, respected, and sustainable age services industry delivering accessible, affordable, quality care and services for older Australians.

We represent providers of age services of all types and sizes located across Australia's metropolitan, regional and rural areas. Consistent with the overall industry profile, 57% of our Members are not-for-profit providers, 33% are for-profit providers and 10% are government providers.

Our diverse and representative membership gives LASA the ability to speak with credibility and authority on issues of importance to older Australians and the age services industry.

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