

13 November 2018

LASA Backs Urgent Appeal to Fund Bush Nurses (open letter to Health Minister Hennessy attached)

Leading Age Services Australia Limited (LASA), the voice of aged care, has backed a call from Victoria's Bush Nursing Centres (BNCs) for the State Government to immediately fund an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) with nurses.

The Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre has written an open letter (see attached) to the Victorian Health Minister Jill Hennessy outlining the critical budget pressures being faced by the centres.

The letter says the BNCs have entered into a two year EBA as they could not afford to enter into a four year agreement.

The letter says continued employment of highly qualified nursing staff is essential to ensure safe, quality local care delivery in rural and remote areas, and it calls on the Minister to immediately fully fund the nurses' EBA over four years and commit to a cost of care study to demonstrate the actual cost of service provision.

"No action will result in current services to small, vulnerable communities being severely impacted," the letter says.

LASA Chief Executive Officer Sean Rooney said Victoria's 15 community-based, not-for-profit Bush Nursing Centres provide a wide range of clinical, health and community services to older people living in those communities.

"It is vital for older Australians living in 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.

Mr Rooney said it was pleasing that the LNP had committed to providing \$300,000 in emergency funding over two years to make sure nurses and support staff can continue to deliver essential primary and emergency health services.

LASA has also written to the Premier, Daniel Andrews, seeking a commitment to further fund the Centres to ensure their ongoing viability and sustainability.

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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