



## MEDIA RELEASE



7 August 2020

# Aged care employees on the frontline of COVID-19 recognised in national day of tribute

On Aged Care Employee Day (ACED 2020), 7 August, we encourage all Australians to say ‘thanks for caring’ to the hundreds of thousands of often unsung heroes who are dedicating their lives to looking after older Australians, in the face of a once-in-a-century emergency.

Over 360,000 devoted aged care workers have been - and remain - on the frontline, working profoundly to safeguard our most vulnerable people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While community transmission of the virus has led to tragic consequences in some aged care homes, the vast majority of older people in residential facilities across the nation, and those receiving care in their own homes, have been protected from the pandemic.

This has been due to the diligence, professionalism and heartfelt concern of aged care staff, including managers, nurses, personal carers, allied health staff, chefs, cleaners, laundry teams and gardeners.

Leading Age Services Australia CEO Sean Rooney says aged care workers must be acknowledged for the vital role they play in our community.

“Appreciating, honouring and thanking these passionate and professional individuals is critical on Aged Care Employee Day and throughout the year,” said Mr Rooney.

“In the face of this extraordinary health emergency, their passion and caring is undaunted. Despite some tragic losses and testing times, their commitment to safeguard our nation’s most vulnerable continues and we are grateful from the bottom of our hearts.”

Aged & Community Services Australia CEO Patricia Sparrow said we must celebrate the work of aged care staff.

“Aged care workers are some of the most passionate and hard-working people in the wider health system,” she said. “They are doing fabulous and heroic work on the frontline of the most challenging period in our lifetimes.

“Aged care workers care deeply. As a wider community we should be better at celebrating their contribution.”

CEO of Catholic Health Australia, Pat Garcia, said their courage was outstanding.

“These past months have been stressful and challenging and yet every day our staff turn up to work to do what they do best - to care for our older Australians with professionalism and compassion,” Mr Garcia said.

“I speak on behalf of all our members when I say thank you and that we pray for your safety.”

Acting CEO of the Aged Care Guild, Nicholas Brown, said their commitment was unparalleled.

“This Aged Care Employee Day is an opportunity for us all to stop and acknowledge the vital role aged care workers play in fighting the current pandemic, getting up every day to care for our loved ones,” he said.

“It is a tough job at the best of times. Now more than ever, as a community, we need to galvanise around these frontline staff and show our appreciation for the essential work they do. To all the aged care staff, we sincerely thank you.”

Kasy Chambers, Executive Director of Anglicare Australia, said they were true heroes.

“Aged care staff – from cleaners to care workers, cooks to nurses, and every role in between – are putting themselves on the frontline of this battle every day to deliver care to those who need it,” she said.

“They should be lauded as heroes of this pandemic, and we must redouble our efforts to invest in their skills, training, and development.”

Nicole Hornsby, Executive Director of Baptist Care Australia said: “A big thank you to all those who work in aged care. What you do brings light and colour into so many people’s lives. Your contribution is invaluable – thank you!”

National Director of UnitingCare Australia, Claerwen Little, said: “Today, and every day, we acknowledge the incredible work of our aged care employees who provide wonderful care for our loved ones.

“Thank you for your dedication, commitment and utmost professionalism as you offer your service to our loved ones in aged care. You truly are our national treasures and everyday heroes making a difference.”

On ACED 2020, Australians are being asked to say thanks for caring, with hundreds of tribute events being held across the country at aged care centres.

ACED 2020 also features a national social media campaign with the hashtags **#ThanksforCaring** and **#ACED2020** highlighting videos, stories and photographs to acknowledge the thousands of employees who have worked to save lives during COVID-19.

The ACED 2020 website is located at [www.agedcareday.com.au](http://www.agedcareday.com.au) and includes resources and special links to pay compliments to individual heroes and teams of aged care staff.

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