

Tuesday, 5 March 2013

## **\$1.2 billion funding injection will hit the right pockets**

The ACTU congratulates the Minister for Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, on his announcement of wage increases for aged care workers as part of the Aged Care Workforce Compact.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said the Minister – by tying the funding to the normal bargaining process – ensured workers could continue to negotiate with employers to improve their wages. This, with the assurance that the wage outcomes could be funded within the parameters of the Compact.

“This is about workers and employers sitting down at the bargaining table and coming up with an agreement. What could be fairer than that?” Ms Kearney said.

“The EBA process will ensure the allocated money reaches workers’ pockets,” she said.

“Unions representing these workers recognised an urgent need for wage increases and have worked tirelessly on this issue for many years.”

“The aged care sector faces a workforce challenge. Many people are reluctant to take a job in a nursing home where they are paid low wages, have an incredible amount of responsibility and work very hard,” Ms Kearney said.

“Increasing wages shows the government understands the value of this workforce and the importance of growing the sector as the number of over-65 year olds swells to one quarter of the population by 2050.”

Ms Kearney said, “We need to know where the Coalition stands on this issue and call on them to commit to supporting unions and workers.”

By the end of the Compact in 2016, aged care workers and nursing staff will receive a boost to wages of about \$46 a week or \$2390 a year for Registered Nurses, \$35 per week or \$1820 a year for Enrolled Nurses, and \$29 per week or \$1510 a year for personal care workers/Assistants in Nursing (AINs).

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