

MEDIA RELEASE

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HISTORIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON EQUAL PAY FOR COMMUNITY WORKERS

Family & Relationship Services Australia, the national peak body for family and relationship services today welcomes Fair Work Australia's decision to address inadequate wage rates in the community services sector.

The Full bench decision endorses proposed increases to current wage rates of between 19% and 41%.

"This decision marks a significant step forward for community services, recognising the importance of front line staff providing vital services to vulnerable Australians", said FRSA Executive Director Samantha Page.

"Workforce mapping in the family & relationship sector shows that the majority of practitioners are degree qualified, over 40 and female. Comparable salaries in the public and private sectors are up to \$30,000 per annum higher than that of the community sector, with more than 60% of organisations reporting recruitment difficulties over a 12 month period."

"While this decision is an important step forward for the community sector, it is disappointing to see the implementation phase extended from 6 to 8 years. This is a long time for practitioners deserving equal remuneration to wait."

"Despite this, we recognise the importance of increased Government funding commensurate with wage increases to ensure that vital services are maintained to the Australian community at or above current levels. The Federal Government is to be congratulated for their commitment to full supplementation of the proposed award rate. We now call on State and Territory Governments to make this same commitment."

"Community organisations are already under resourced and cannot absorb cost increases without negative impacts. In our submission to the Federal budget process, we have identified the supplementation of wage increases as the highest priority in the family support area."

"Decent wages are vital to ensuring that community services remain viable and effective and this must not come at the cost of the quantum of services provided to the vulnerable and disadvantaged families in Australia."

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Family Relationship Services Australia is the national peak body for over 150 family relationship and support service providers, operating in more than 650 locations across Australia. For more information visit

www.frsa.org.au

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