



FRONTIER SERVICES MEDIA RELEASE - FEDERAL BUDGET RESPONSE

Despite some pleasing addressed issues, this year's Budget continues the familiar pattern of missed opportunities and disappointment in relation to those living in rural and remote Australia.

Supporting the Rural and remote Communities is essential for Frontier Services. The Federal Government has made some pleasing steps in the right direction. However, there are still some gaps to cover. Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) Interim Chairperson Ps Mark Kickett welcomed the announcement of **\$542m** over 3 years to support the provision of remote housing for First Nations Peoples in the Northern Territory and Queensland. Ps Kickett said: "However while this announcement is welcomed it is still well short of what is really required to make any headway into the shortfalls, after decades of neglect".

We were pleased to hear the **additional** support for mental health including the **\$6.3m** for fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out workers, the digital mental support. The recognition of the gap in mental health support for regional and remote is such a welcome relief.

We are concerned about the silent ongoing assistance for these communities as we know first hand the dangerous gaps in relying on fly in and fly out and digital support is simply not enough. These solutions only place these communities with higher levels of suicide rates.

Jannine Jackson, National Director "We are in a mental health crisis with crippling statistics on the rise. As much as fly in and fly out services are vital, there needs to be significant focus on additional and ongoing support to those needing treatment."

While we appreciate the response, there is limited access to reliable internet and our concern is that when in a crisis communication is critical.

When you are dealing with delicate issues like suicide and suicide ideation, having ongoing access to **real** people is essential.

Whilst the \$4.0m in funding over 2021-22 is appreciated to continue to provide up to ten free trauma and distress counselling sessions for those impacted by the bushfires.

Jannine Jackson, National Director expresses her concerns “In less than 12 months, our rural and remote communities have experienced the worst drought in Australian recorded history, floods, cyclones, a mouse plague and covid. It isn't just bushfire victims needing trauma counselling” she calls on the government to “please step forward and support those who are doing it incredibly tough regardless of the disaster that has created the trauma.”

Frontier Services Is concerned again, that there are forgotten people in the bush.

Frontier Services are delighted that there is recognition for the gap from a health care perspective, the increased medicare levy is a brilliant start. **Including the \$80.9 million** to support the delivery of primary care and the health workforce in rural and remote Australia.

The \$998.1m for initiatives to reduce, and support the victims of Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence (FDSV) against women and children. **Family domestic violence** is a significant issue for women and families in rural and remote communities, The Federal government needs to take significant and concerted action to prevent these issues, these life threatening issues. Our concern is that this is a much more complex issue in rural and remote areas than metro as there are no safe houses. We know it is a significant, complicated issue and requires a concerted, collaborative effort for all agencies to come together and find a solution.

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