

Dear Associate to the Honourable President Hatcher

AM2020/99 - Application to vary the Aged Care Award 2010

AM2021/65 – Application to vary the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010

I write this letter in support of the Health Services Union’s submission of 22 September 2023.

Statement of Liz de Berardis

I, Liz de Berardis, of 22 Brookhollow Avenue, BAULKHAM HILLS NSW 2153, state as follows:

1. I am General Manager – People and Culture for BaptistCare NSW & ACT (“BaptistCare”).
2. I have worked for BaptistCare for one and a half years, having worked in the aged care industry in senior Human Resources roles for more than five (5) years.

About BaptistCare NSW & ACT

3. BaptistCare is a not-for-profit provider of aged care and community services. We operate 21 residential aged care homes and look after more than 8000 home care clients across NSW and ACT, including in both metropolitan and regional areas.
4. BaptistCare aged care employees are covered by the *BaptistCare NSW & ACT Aged Care Enterprise Agreement 2017*, (“BaptistCare Enterprise Agreement”) and *Blue Hills (Aged Care) NSWNMA-ANMF Branch and HSU NSW Branch Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021*, *Durham Green (Aged Care) NSWNMA-ANMF Branch and HSU NSW Branch Enterprise Agreement 2017* and *Durham Green (Aged Care) NSWNMA-ANMF Branch and HSU NSW Branch Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021* (the latter three instruments hereafter collectively the “Tulich Enterprise Agreements”).
5. The Enterprise Agreements in total cover 3559 employees.

6. The BaptistCare Enterprise Agreement covers 3395 employees, comprising of 2379 residential aged care employees and 1016 Home Care employees.
7. The Tulich Enterprise Agreements cover 164 employees, all in residential aged care.
8. These roles are:

BC At Home – EA Roles	Count
Admin Officer/Coordinator	48
Administration Assistant	1
Administration Officer	3
Care Service Employee	960
Care Supervisor	1
Care Supervisor EN	2
Registered Nurse	1
Grand Total	1016

BC Residential – EA Roles	Count
Funding Coordinator	1
Admin Officer/Coordinator	69
Administration Officer	4
Assistant In Nursing	19
Care Service Employee - Carer	1269
Care Service Employee - Catering	310
Care Service Employee - Cleaner	68
Care Service Employee - Gardener	1
Care Service Employee - Laundry	39
Care Service Employee - Lifestyle	80
Care Service Employee - Maintenance	13
Care Service Employee - Physio Aide	2
Care Supervisor	67
Care Supervisor EN	21
Client Liaison Administrator	5
Client Liaison Officer	1
Client Relations Officer	1
Clinical Nurse Educator	1
Cook Unsupervised	3
Education & Quality Supervisor	13
Enrolled Nurse	1

Facility Cook	23
Maintenance Officer	1
Maintenance Supervisor	8
Qualified Chef	8
Registered Nurse	346
Training & Quality Coordinator	5
Grand Total	2379

Tulich – EA Roles	Count
Cleaning	1
Endorsed Enrolled Nurse	3
Laundry	1
Personal Care Assistant - Carer	122
Personal Care Assistant - Kitchen	1
Personal Care Assistant - Laundry	4
Personal Care Assistant - Lifestyle	3
Recreational Activities Officer	1
Registered Nurse	26
Team Leader - PCA	2
Grand Total	164

9. Of these employees, 126 (4%) are full time, 2767 (82%) are part-time and 666 (20%) are casual.

Submissions – Indirect Care Workers

10. BaptistCare notes that 431 (32%) of Care Service Employees under the BaptistCare Enterprise Agreement work in roles outside of the care stream (including laundry, catering and maintenance). This significant cohort of indirect care workers did not receive the increase under Stage 2 of the Work Value Case.
11. In practical terms, this has led to employees who are on the same functional classification of the Enterprise Agreement with same qualifications and experience level being \$3.74 an hour worse off if they are working in an indirect care role. This equates to \$7,390.24 per year for a full-time employee.
12. BaptistCare notes that 76% of our employees in indirect care roles (laundry, maintenance, cleaning and administration) are female. BaptistCare believes that splitting classifications into direct and indirect care further entrenches inequity in an already feminised industry such as aged care.

13. From an operational perspective, splitting classifications into direct and indirect care has proven challenging. BaptistCare adopts a person-centred care approach to our residents, and the classification structure in both the BaptistCare Enterprise Agreement and the Tulich Enterprise Agreements is designed to permit staff working across tasks and streams of work to provide holistic care for residents. Anecdotally, we have heard reports that staff now classified as indirect care are less willing to assist their direct care colleagues as they are getting paid markedly different rates.
14. This has been challenging to administer also. The Care Service Employee and Personal Care Assistant roles in both Enterprise Agreements could previously be flexibly rostered in accordance with the scope of their classifications, meaning staff could choose to work in both care and catering as an example to respond to the needs of the site. Demarcating direct and indirect roles makes rostering more difficult for the rostering team while also limiting the ability for staff to pick up additional work for the same money across different work streams.
15. BaptistCare has noticed that it is more difficult to retain indirect care workers as a result of the inequity in wages compared to direct care workers.

Rolling 12 month turnover average		
	Direct care	Indirect care
Jun-23	35.2%	38.9%
Oct-23	29.3%	38.6%
Difference	-5.9%	-0.3%

At the time of writing indirect care workers have a 12 month rolling turnover rate of 38.6% compared to direct care workers with a rate of 29.3%. The difference is stark when comparing current rates against the June 2023 rates – indirect care workers had a turnover rate of 38.9% a few months ago (a decline of only 0.3 percentage points) compared to direct care workers who were at 35.3% turnover. The reduction in turnover in the same period is a statistically significant 5.9 percentage points. Retention of direct care staff has improved significantly, perhaps due to the impact of the Stage 2 decision of the Work Value case, but crucially indirect care staff are leaving BaptistCare at the same rate as prior to the Stage 2 decision. This shows the Stage 2 decision has helped retain direct care staff but not indirect care staff, demonstrating disparity among the two cohorts.

16. Increased acuity in residents is a challenge for all staff, not only direct care and clinical staff. For indirect care staff involved in food preparation, their role of preparing nutritious meals in accordance with resident’s care and dietary needs is a key component BaptistCare’s capacity to deliver quality care and services in accordance with the Aged Care Quality Standards. Cooking and preparing fresh meals and adapting menus to cater for resident needs and preferences is

essential in ensuring the Standards are met. This involves intimately knowing the residents by knowing their preferences and limitations and helping with communicating their wants and needs in an appropriate way and in accordance with difficulties in various levels of resident cognition and impairment. It may further involve observing residents they support, and recognising changes in their needs and preferences, needs and challenges, or immediate risks.

17. Employees engaged with other indirect care work such as laundry, cleaning and maintenance interact significantly with our residents. As with the catering staff, laundry, cleaning and maintenance staff regularly communicate with residents in various stages of dementia or other cognitive decline and must do so respectfully, patiently and in a way that is person-centred. More than 80% of our residents have a formal diagnosis of dementia whilst many others exhibit additional challenging behaviours that indirect staff must engage with appropriately.
18. The challenges of employees employed in these roles, compared to similar roles in other industries, such as hotelling or general maintenance, are significant: the customer base they inherently interact with – both directly and indirectly – requires a level of emotional intelligence, situational awareness and service ethic more nuanced and sophisticated than alternate environments. These employees' work is subject to the high scrutiny of additional compliance requirements of the Aged Care Act and the Aged Care Quality Standards, in particular, as it is for direct care workers. Few 'typical' laundry, cleaning or maintenance staff in alternate industries would regularly witness death, its effects on families and the inevitable practical matters which follow that staff may be directly or indirectly be involved in. Few 'typical' laundry, cleaning or maintenance staff in alternate industries would be faced with the behavioural challenges, grief, scrutiny and related workplace psychosocial risks which those performing their work in aged care settings face. The elevated level of emotional and adaptive intelligence required by these staff to perform their work should be appropriately valued.
19. Staffing challenges has increased the complexity of administrative staff who are principally involved in rostering, filling vacant shifts and coordinating enquiries including an increasing number of enquiries from resident families. The complexity of rostering in 24-7 environments requires skills in negotiation, stakeholder management and customer service. It is work now subject, since 2019, to the Aged Care Quality Standards by ensuring that services have the right skill mix present to provide care and services. While accountability for achieving that standard may sit with service leaders, the administrative staff now carry significant operational load to ensuring the work is achieved. Such work also requires good understanding of residents and staff members to ensure that residents needs and preferences, cultural and other diverse requirements are met, alongside operational requirements of the service. The work now also requires administration staff have clear commercial acumen and basic industrial relations to ensure employees are rostered in accordance with relevant employment conditions, and in keeping with services' labour budgets.

Submissions – Direct Care Workers

20. BaptistCare supports the submission from Health Services Union dated 22 September 2023 calling for an additional funded increase for direct care workers, and the same total additional funded increase for indirect care workers.
21. At the time of writing BaptistCare currently has 390 vacant positions (approximately 8.5% of total workforce required) across its portfolio, many of these in regional areas where the talent pool is limited. The number of vacant positions has increased from 360 vacant positions in June 2023. While retention of direct care workers has increased (see paragraph 15 for further details), attracting candidates to work in aged care compared to similar industries with higher base pay remains a challenge. The challenge is a fraught combination of comparably lower wages, and comparably higher skill, effort and challenge to the work. As complexity in industrial relations, economic, regulatory and demographic challenges continue to increase, so will the margin between the skill required to perform these roles in aged care, relative to other sectors.
22. COVID-19 has shone a spotlight on the complexities of caring for vulnerable, elderly Australians in a highly infectious environment. While community restrictions have eased, both direct and non-direct care staff have had to deal with outbreaks of COVID-19, rhinovirus, gastroenteritis and other infectious diseases, all while providing specialised, person-centred care. These outbreaks, including COVID-19, and the associated costs incurred with outbreaks will remain part of aged care and highlights the important role that employees have in maintaining stringent infection controls.
23. BaptistCare supports an additional funded increases to direct and indirect care workers to ensure the ongoing attraction in working in such an important industry, ensuring we can retain great employees and ensuring the industry is sustainable, stable and is able to meet the complex care needs of elderly Australians.



Liz de Berardis
General Manager – People and Culture
BaptistCare NSW & ACT

1 November 2023