

Please find below a statement by **Lin Hatfield Dodds, CEO, The Benevolent Society**, who will be in attendance at the Federal Government's National Jobs and Skills Summit at Parliament House, Canberra, 1-2 September 2022. Ms Hatfield Dodds says the summit is an opportunity to realise the full potential of the care economy and creating an agenda that paves the way forward.

MEDIA STATEMENT: 31 August 2022

Lin Hatfield Dodds, CEO, The Benevolent Society:

“The National Jobs and Skills Summit needs to focus on bringing our country’s care economy to maturity.

An agenda that addresses the shortage in labour supply and skills mix, resources and funding arrangements, and a system governance that drives quality and value for money for citizens, will benefit the care economy and, in turn, the quality of life for all Australians.

Migration targeted to the needs of human services and a focus on skills and training is essential. Migration settings that attract the specific skills required by the care economy, such as allied health professionals, and psychologists, are needed.

Australia needs better pathways for skills and training in human services to create opportunities and lift pay for lower skill workers, as well as improving the quality of care. Government should recognise and resource human service providers that train their workforce through in-house and on the job training, complementing the VET and university systems. Service providers currently deliver this training out of thin margins, which limits training volumes. Resourced properly, this would be an effective way to rapidly expand the care workforce, addressing shortages at the lower skills levels of the care economy.

Improving the quality and reliability of care is essential, in addition to delivering a given level of service more efficiently as the sector scales up to meet rising demand. Better and more reliable care requires a workforce sized to meet demand and improved worker skills rewarded by higher take home pay.

Systems change is also required to drive higher quality and reliability in the care sector, and ensure value for money. Our human services system must enable innovation and flexibility, in return for clear accountability and greater transparency. Good performance should be rewarded, and poor performance identified and addressed. Regulation, accreditation, and consumer choice are each important. Public funding levels and arrangements need to be reviewed, and aggregate funding increased to enable appropriate quality care.

“A robust care economy is essential to ensuring no one is left behind and the summit will help shape the agenda for how we get to that point.”

---ENDS---

FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES & INTERVIEW REQUESTS, CONTACT:

The Benevolent Society

M: 0413-995-189 (Jon Abbott) | 0421-761-332 (Elizabeth Johnson)

E: jon.abbott@benevolent.org.au | Elizabeth.Johnson@benevolent.org.au

About The Benevolent Society

The Benevolent Society, operating since 1813, provides integrated support services to children, young people and families, older Australians, people with disability and carers. It has more than 1,000 people-first practitioners working to help people live their life, their way. As one of Australia's first charitable organisations, The Benevolent Society has pioneered positive social change and uses its practice wisdom to advocate for a just, caring society.