

Budget Scores 2 out of 5: Must try harder

“The Budget scores two out of five” said Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director of UnitingCare Australia.

“People with disabilities and people who are sick are paying for the Government’s defence spending spree. It is economically and socially irresponsible to spend \$2.8 billion on border protection to keep out a small number of asylum seekers while driving tens of thousands of people further into poverty, and imposing hardship on hundreds of thousands more.”

“The Government has changed the rules for people on the Disability Support Pension without ensuring appropriate support. The changes are designed to save money but are dressed up as empowerment.”

“The Stronger Families and Communities Strategy is a good program that has been poorly implemented. Funds have been unwisely reduced over the next two years, due to slow take up, rather than improving program delivery.”

“Ageing scores reasonably well due to the increase in care funding and the emphasis on planning for the future.”

“Unfortunately the bad news outweighs the good in the budget.”

UnitingCare Australia Budget Scorecard

<i>Budget Measures:</i>		Changes to Disability Support	Healthy Ageing	Stronger Families and Communities	Resource shift to border protection
<i>Criteria:</i>					
VALUES	Promotes equality of opportunity	2	2	4	1
	Supports those most disadvantaged	1	2	3	1
	Builds community and shared responsibility	1	3	4	1
	Enhances dignity and freedom	1	3	4	1
STRATEGY	Promotes best practice in service delivery	2	3	2	2
	Addresses underlying causes	3	4	2	2
	Builds towards long term solutions	2	4	3	1
	Good use of resources	1	3	1	1
Overall values and strategy		1	3	2	1

Background

The UnitingCare Australia Scorecard assesses each Budget measure against eight criteria that together provide a balanced picture of ‘overall values and strategy’ embodied in the Howard Government’s 2002-03 Budget. The criteria have been chosen to reflect the core values that UnitingCare agencies believe should shape service delivery and social policy, and general principles of good public policy.

Explanation of scores

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|--------------------------|---|---|
| 5 Excellent. | <i>'Top of the class'</i> | Well above required standard. Indicates leadership and represents or is consistent with best practice in this area. |
| 4 Good. | <i>'Good work, keep going'</i> | Comfortably meets required standard. Solid performance across most areas. |
| 3 Satisfactory. | <i>'Room for improvement'</i> | Meets required standard overall, although some aspects of performance may need improvement to meet expectations. |
| 2 Unsatisfactory. | <i>'Must try harder'</i> | Fails to meet required standard, although some aspects of performance may meet expectations. Policies and practices need modification or refinements. |
| 1 Poor. | <i>'Back to the drawing board'</i> | Well below required standard. Significant effort urgently required to meet expectations. Policy frameworks, directions and/or practices require fundamental reform or review. |

Criteria used

Underlying values:

- **Promoting equality of opportunity** for individuals, communities and peoples both respects basic rights, and is an important means of enhancing the well-being of individuals and groups. It encompasses equal access to resources, services, and information and knowledge. It also implies shared responsibilities, empowerment, and full participation in decision making.
- **Supporting the most disadvantaged** is a basic tenet of justice, and is reflected in community action to aid and empower those who are excluded from full social participation, suffer oppression, or are systematically disadvantaged by existing circumstances and institutions.
- **Builds community and shared responsibility** recognises that our national life is strongest and richest when our collective life and responsibilities are cherished in the same way as our individual achievements and rights. Diversity should be to be honoured and celebrated, and all of us should avoid exploiting attitudes rooted in fear or distrust or misunderstanding for our own advantage or some sectional interest.
- **Promotes dignity and freedom** affirms the value of all people regardless of age, gender, sexuality, gender, colour, creed or cultural origins. Policies should affirm basic rights and freedoms, including respect for individual preferences and choice when accessing community resources and services.

Strategy and policy principles:

- **Promotes best practice service delivery** asks whether initiatives encourage better outcomes for the community and those in need, rather than focusing on cutting costs or trimming important services.
- **Addresses underlying causes** assesses the degree to which initiatives are targeting the real problem, rather than the symptoms.
- **Works towards long term solutions** reflects the importance of having a sound medium term policy approach, rather than short term reactive thinking that costs more and delivers less in the long run.
- **Good use of public resources** asks whether money has been spent in real priority areas, or savings made in the areas that will least effect community well-being.

UnitingCare Australia is the national agency for UnitingCare, a network of over 400 service providers across the Uniting Church dedicated to providing assistance to individuals, families and communities. The UnitingCare network is one of the largest providers of community services in Australia.

Contacts:

Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director, UnitingCare Australia: (bh) 02 6290 2160 (m) 0408 402 222