Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for joining me here today at Catholic Healthcare.

Before I begin I want to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to Elders past, present and future.

I also acknowledge other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people here this morning.

I acknowledge my Federal colleague, John Alelxander, the Member for Bennelong, and whose electorate we are in for today’s event.

I wish to acknowledge David Marr, the CEO of Catholic Healthcare, and Janis Redford, who have invited us to make this important announcement today.

Also with us today are:

- Dr Stephen Judd, the CEO of HammondCare;
- Ms Roslyn Silvia Blair from the Wyanga Aboriginal Corporation; and
- Dr Rosy Walia, CEO, of Multicultural Aged Care

Today I am delighted to announce an extra $115 million in aged care funding for the benefit of our older Australians who want to remain living at home and in their communities.

I appreciate the work Catholic Healthcare provides to older Australians and the grant you will receive will ensure you can expand this great work.

This $115 million in additional support through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme means that many more older Australians will be able to continue to live independently at home, surrounded by family and friends in their community.
This funding is being targeted to support vulnerable people, including the homeless, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse and those in rural Australia.

Catholic Healthcare is one of some 245 organisations that will receive funding to deliver important aged care services across Australia.

Right now the Commonwealth Home Support Programme supports more than 640,000 older people across Australia to live at home and maintain their independence.

The Commonwealth Home Support Programme is the entry level tier of the end-to-end aged care system.

It is underpinned by a ‘wellness approach’ which is about building on older people’s strengths, capacity and goals to help them remain independent and living safely in their home.

The program offers either low intensity ongoing support – such as domestic assistance and care services – or higher intensity support and care services on a short term or episodic basis – such as allied health and respite for carers.

It provides a small amount of care and support to a large number of older people to help them stay at home to delay, or avoid altogether, the need to move to more complex forms of aged care such as home care packages or residential care.

In addition, the Commonwealth Home Support Programme provides funding to a large number of organisations like Catholic Healthcare.

Organisations that use a workforce made up of many volunteers, ensuring hundreds of thousands of volunteers remain active while supporting older people and making a meaningful contribution within their local communities.

We are giving people choice. We are making sure they get practical help.

We are making available meaningful, necessary services that build on an older person’s strengths, capacity and goals to help them remain living at home.

For example, if you have an injury, or have been hospitalised, and are assessed as needing assistance, the Commonwealth Home Support Programme will improve your independence by helping you to reach your goals and to help you get back on your feet after you return home.

Or you might be travelling pretty well, but need just a little bit of assistance with your personal care or some general home maintenance, or a few modifications to make your home safer.

Maybe you need help with the laundry or cleaning.

Or it could be help with shopping, attending an appointment or a social event in the community.

Again – this is smart, practical, on-the-ground support, where and when it’s needed.
The extra $115 million in funding will be used to help older people — 65 years and over, or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The services will be delivered in a culturally appropriate way that reflects our diverse multicultural society.

I understand that Catholic Healthcare, employs more than 3,500 staff with employees of different faiths, backgrounds and nationalities.

This is of tremendous importance to our older people as the care they receive should reflect the society we live in.

Helping older people to stay at home and remain in their communities is another way the Government is providing choice in aged care services so that the people who built this nation can live a dignified old age.

It's about providing quality services for older Australians, the services they want, in the right way, at the right time.

I commend the work of Catholic Healthcare and all the providers who work every day to make sure our older Australians receive the help they need.