



## Australian Association of Social Workers - AASW

Media Release 1 February 2012 - for immediate release

Further information: Karen Healy (National President) – 0413 220 803

# Social Workers applaud Fair Work Australia's historic validation of the landmark equal pay claims of Social and Community workers.

AASW members welcome and acknowledge the historic decision by Fair Work Australia in the equal pay case brought by the Australian Services Union that will deliver long awaited pay rises of between 19 and 41 per cent to Social and Community workers.

The AASW is the only national organisation for social workers in Australia, with 6,500 members. Around 1 in 5 AASW members works in the not for profit sector, providing a wide range of services to Australians. Social Workers work in drug and alcohol services, community health centres, housing services, mental health services, family violence services and child and family welfare services. Social workers often provide the backbone to community sector organisations. The social work degree equips people with the skills, values and knowledge to work in the community sector.

**Professor Karen Healy, AASW National President**, said, "The AASW has wholeheartedly supported the ASU in this campaign. Whilst the AASW is disappointed that the majority decision of the tribunal ruled to phase in the pay-rises over eight years rather than the six years as suggested by the joint submission of the Gillard government and the Australian Services Union, we are pleased most workers will receive pay increases of around 20 per cent and a smaller number of more senior workers will attain higher rates."

"Australians who receive community services must be able to rely on the competence, continuity, capacity, integrity and professionalism of the staff, regardless of the nature of the service accessed. Raising pay and improving conditions is a vital first step to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce to deliver these vital community services"

The AASW calls on all Governments to play their part in:

- Ensuring a sustainable community sector by committing funding to these improved pay rates, which will directly assist in quality staff recruitment and retention;
- Lifting the skills and qualifications of the community sector workforce by introducing a national accreditation scheme for the community sector;
- Developing a national community sector workforce strategy to recruit and retain skilled people to deliver community services;
- Reviewing the funding and contracts for community services, to ensure sustainable services with minimal compliance costs;
- Specific measures to attract skilled staff to remote and rural Australia."

---

Further information: **Karen Healy (National President) – 0413 220 803**

Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW)