

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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*For immediate release*

### **AASW Welcomes Prime Minister's Decision to Mend the Pay Gap**

Prime Minister Julia Gillard's announcement of \$1 billion to fund pay increases for social and community service workers is a welcome decision. This funding will go a long way towards addressing the pay inequity experienced by skilled workers in this sector. The decision will help to address the high workforce turnover among social and community services workers. AASW President, Professor Karen Healy, says "Fair pay means that the social and community services sector will be better able to reward and retain skilled workers. This is good news for social workers and for the people our profession serves." The Prime Minister's decision follows from Fair Work Australia's determination in February this year that social and community service workers' pay did not adequately recognise the qualifications, knowledge and skill required to undertake this often complex and difficult work. FWA found that the low salaries of workers in the sector were due to gender inequality and ruled that pay increases of between 23 and 45% were needed to address this long standing pay inequality.

Social workers in the not-for-profit sector will be affected by the decision. Around 1 in 5 AASW members work 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.

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