

QLD NEWS

\$40m loss for Qld nursing homes

A major Queensland aged care and private hospital provider has asked for more government assistance after a shocking financial result.

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AGED-CARE giant UnitingCare demanded more taxpayer cash yesterday after a shock loss of \$40 million in Queensland last year.

UnitingCare Queensland — which operates 56 Blue Care nursing homes, as well as Lifeline and The Wesley, St Andrew's, St Stephen's and Buderim private hospitals — has revealed a \$40 million operating deficit in its annual report.

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Its final “comprehensive loss” was \$16.5 million, after clawing back \$23.6 million on paper through a property revaluation in 2019.

Executives pocketed \$4.6 million.

UnitingCare failed government quality and safety checks at seven nursing homes in the past two years. Blue Care said it had fixed these problems.

UnitingCare Queensland corporate affairs director Matthew Cuming said yesterday there were no plans to close nursing homes or cut staff, but called for more public funding.

“We serve regional and remote communities where the for-profit providers often choose not to go,” he said.

“We need urgent federally led structural and funding reform to ensure our sustainability.”

UnitingCare refused to reveal the salary paid to chief executive Craig Barke, saying it was commercial-in-confidence.

Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union secretary Beth Mohle demanded more details of how aged-care businesses spent taxpayers' money.

“Given the vast amounts of taxpayer dollars being given to organisations like UnitingCare Queensland, it seems only reasonable the salaries of their top earners be made public,” Ms Mohle said.

Taxpayers gave UnitingCare Queensland \$664 million in government grants last year, the financial statements show.

It received \$939 million in other revenue, including federal government subsidies, and spent \$1 billion on staff costs.

Leading Aged Services Australia, which represents 200 aged-care homes, yesterday called for \$1.3 billion in extra taxpayer funding over the next 18 months to prevent unplanned closures.