



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurses rally for ratios in aged care this International Nurses Day

Thousands of nurses across the country will rally together and call on the Federal government to make aged care ratios law this International Nurses Day (Saturday, 12 May).

The actions are part of a nation-wide push to address systemic problems within aged care after little progress from six inquiries into the sector over the past 18 months.

During today's public hearing into the *Inquiry into the Quality of Care in Residential Aged Care Facilities*, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) identified a shortage of nurses and inadequate reporting of incidents as serious endemic issues causing unsafe conditions in many aged care facilities.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, presented evidence of the need for mandated nurse-to-patient ratios to ensure safe staffing levels and an adequate skills mix.

"Aged care in Australia is in crisis. Over the last 13 years, chronic understaffing has seen a 400% increase in preventable deaths of elderly Australians in residential aged care, with hundreds dying from falls, choking and suicide," said Mr Holmes.

"Understaffing is resulting in nurses having to look after more and more patients every shift. This is not safe for overworked nurses and it is not safe for residents.

"Last year, owners of aged care facilities racked up over \$1 billion in profits, while aged care residents receive one and a half hours less care than they should, every day. It is imperative the Federal government put forward legislation to ensure the \$2.17 billion in government subsidies given to these for-profit providers is spent directly on their care."

Brett Holmes will join nurses and community supporters tomorrow in Parramatta Park for the launch of the NSWNMA campaign.

"While we welcome an increase aged care funding for home care in the 2018-19 Federal Budget, it is deeply disappointing to see nothing set aside for safe staffing ratios in residential aged care," said Mr Holmes.

"Aged care nurses, residents and their families have waited a very long time for action. There is more than enough evidence pointing to the need for more nurses and a staffing methodology that acknowledges skill mix. We're asking all federal politicians to stop ignoring the staffing crisis in aged care and commit to supporting ratios."

*The NSWNMA Ratios for Aged Care launch will take place at the **Bowling Green in Parramatta Park** (Corner Pitt and Macquarie Streets, Parramatta) on **Saturday, 12 May** from **11am – 1pm**. Media are welcome to attend.*



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