



Now is the time to act

Australia's aged care sector is in crisis – and part of the solution must be a major boost to funding from the Federal Government.

A recent Productivity Commission report, *Caring for Older Australians*, acknowledges that urgent reforms are needed.

Statements from senior Federal Government leaders also recognise the need for significant changes in aged care.

Yet the Government has not yet committed to a realistic action plan to address the pressing problems across the aged care sector.

Two years ago, the Australian Nursing Federation launched the Because We Care campaign.

Because We Care provides effective solutions to address the aged care crisis.

With the release of the final Productivity Commission report into aged care, the time for action is now.

The Federal Government must act without delay to close the aged care wages gap, regulate for the right mix of skills and hours, and fund quality care.

— Lee Thomas, ANF Federal Secretary



7 reasons why Aged Care can't wait

1. There is a critical shortage of nurses in aged care.

The aged care sector needs more than 20,000 additional nurses right now.

2. The Australian population is ageing.

The ageing of our population means that unless urgent action is taken the shortage will get worse, on top of the shortages we are already facing.

3. Nurses in aged care are paid less than nurses in public hospitals.

This must be fixed if we want to recruit and retain enough nurses to provide adequate care in aged care now and into the future.

4. The wages gap continues to grow.

The wages gap between aged care nurses and nurses in public hospitals has doubled over the past decade, from \$84 a week in 2002 to over \$168 on average today.

5. Quality care of residents must be at the centre of any reform.

Any review of aged care must include a significant funding injection to ensure that quality care is at the centre of aged care, and must allow providers to attract nurses to aged care by lifting wages.

6. There is no funding increase guaranteed in budget 2012.

Budget 2012 MUST be the Aged Care Budget. If the Federal Government waits any longer to fix aged care, the situation will become even worse and residents will suffer.

7. Additional tied funding will be delivered through enterprise bargaining.

This would deliver wage increases directly to workers, and maintain workplace flexibility. It would ensure that good providers who bargain will be given additional funding by the Government to close the wages gap.



Losing good carers

'Nurses and carers become like family to us. It's depressing when they leave, one after the other, because the wages are so low. Carers and nurses have heavy and responsible jobs and need to be paid accordingly. Otherwise the good staff just don't stay.'

Brenda Clarke,
aged care resident, Canberra.



Paid \$10,000 less

'I like working with the elderly. It's an interesting job that takes in all aspects of nursing. But I am paid around \$10,000 per year less than I would be in a public hospital. They seem to think that because you work with old people they can pay you less.'

Terri Burrell,
Registered Nurse, Sydney.



No funding for us

'I've worked as an AiN for 25 years. I stay because I love my job. In that time I've seen our workloads increase and the focus move away from the residents. I'm currently paid \$19.35 per hour. When we ask, we are told there is no funding for more hours or better pay.'

Mary Stranaghan,
Assistant in Nursing, Brisbane

Build workplace support

Help make the 2012 budget the Aged Care Budget.
Hold a workplace meeting and pass this resolution in support:

We the employees / residents / family members / community members of:

call on Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Treasurer Wayne Swan to make budget 2012 the Aged Care Budget.

We call on the Prime Minister and Treasurer to ensure that there is an injection of funding in budget 2012 to fix the nursing shortage, close the wages gap, and put the care back into aged care.

What you can do

Tell the Prime Minister and the Treasurer that Aged Care Can't Wait.

The Federal Government must act now to solve the aged care crisis. The 2012 budget must be the Aged Care Budget.

Let PM Julia Gillard and Treasurer Wayne Swan know:

Email: Go to www.becausewecare.org.au and email Canberra instantly.

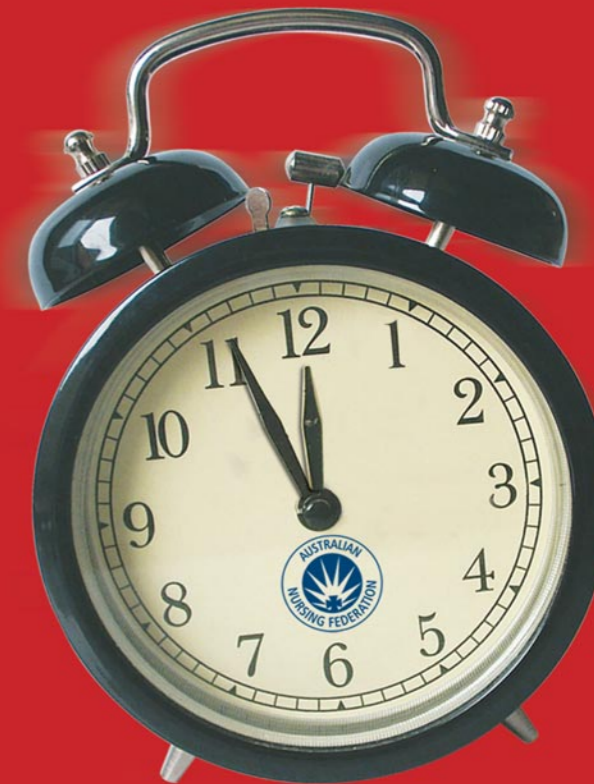
Postcard: Ask your union delegate or organiser for the campaign postcard to send to Canberra.

MPs pledge support

MPs, Senators and community leaders around Australia are showing their support for quality aged care by signing the ANF's Because We Care giant pledge card.



Queensland MP Shayne Neumann signs the Because We Care pledge.



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because we care
Quality care for older Australians



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