

Media Release

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How much do Australians care about aged care?

Australia's peak body for aged care and community services supports the Australian Nursing Federation's national call for proper remuneration for nurses working in aged-care.

Aged and Community Services Australia (ACSA) has already called on the Federal Government to recognise the critical deficit in funding for nursing and other care staff who undertake vital work in caring for our elderly citizens.

ACSA CEO Greg Mundy said the ANF had highlighted the long-standing concerns of the industry regarding attracting and keeping nursing staff.

"Aged-care providers prioritize any additional funding allocations to ensure the quality of care is the best it can be," Mr Mundy said.

"As we stated in our budget submission, more generous funding in public and private hospital systems has enabled higher wages in these sectors and hampered efforts of aged-care providers to compete."

A 2007 report by the National Institute of Labour Studies: *Who Cares for Older Australians? A Picture of the Residential and Community Based Aged Care Workforce*, reveals that a quarter of personal carers and community care workers and one in five nurses have to be replaced every year.

"Without proper recognition of the demanding and vital work undertaken by these individuals, including competitive wages, it is little wonder there is dissatisfaction and low retention rates," Mr Mundy said.

"Nursing staff and personal care workers are simply invaluable and at the very least they need to be properly paid.

"The high quality of community care has also meant that aged care residents are being admitted much later in their lives, but with more complex health issues significantly reducing the likelihood of long-term residency."

Mr Mundy said all of ACSA's providers seek to deliver the best care possible. "I am delighted that the ANF and its members are demonstrating their genuine care and interest in wanting the best for Australia's elderly.

"But every Australian needs to care, not just today, not just about salaries, but every day we need to remind ourselves that aged care is something which will concern us all, at some stage.

"Do we as a community care enough to demand the government address the long running concerns about inadequate funding for aged care? Or do we care only when a tragic story pricks our conscience?"

For Further Information

Greg Mundy CEO ACSA Mobile: 0416 203 065