



## Media Release

Attention: news, health, aged care  
Friday, June 19, 2009

### Critical need for safe staffing levels in aged care

With nearly 40% of aged care residents spending less than one year in a nursing home and 18% less than 3 months, it is critical that the Australian government acts now to implement minimum staffing levels and an adequate skills mix of carers, enrolled and registered nursing staff.

The AIHW report on residential aged care in Australia 2007-2008 reveals nursing home residents are now frailer and sicker than ever before. Half have a diagnosis of dementia and a significant number have complex diseases such as heart conditions and connective tissue diseases like severe arthritis.

“Nursing homes are like mini hospitals, with nurses and carers having to provide a high level of nursing and end of life care,” said ANF Federal Secretary Ged Kearney.

“We need the right mix of staff with the expertise, experience and qualifications to recognise disease complications. We need staff who understand the impact of medication regimes and who also have the time to provide emotional support to residents and their families at a very difficult time,” Ms Kearney said.

The ANF because we care campaign, is seeking improved working conditions for nurses and carers working in aged care to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce to care for older Australians.

“At a time when Australia’s population is ageing and more and more people need residential aged care, the number of registered and enrolled nurses working in the sector has dropped significantly,” Ms Kearney said. The AIHW report demonstrates the need for a highly skilled workforce and this will only be achieved by recognising that nurses and carers deserve to be paid fairly and work in facilities with an appropriate skills mix.”

### Media inquiries

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#### ANF Journals

Australian Nursing Journal  
Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing  
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