



MEDIA RELEASE

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EQUAL PAY DAY

AGED CARE WORKERS AMONG AUSTRALIA'S WORST PAID, 95 PER CENT WOMEN

The Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) has marked 'Equal Pay Day' by joining the ACTU to call for an end to the gender pay gap. ANF Federal Secretary Ged Kearney said pay inequity is at its worst in aged care, where the workforce is 95 per cent women.

"Aged care is overwhelmingly a female dominated profession and needs positive recognition and valuing as they care for our most vulnerable Australians." Ms Kearney said.

"Aged care nurses and carers do some of the most important work in the community, yet are paid up to \$300 a week less than nurses and carers in public hospitals. It is terribly unfair.

"The wage disparity is just one issue facing the aged care industry in Australia. It desperately needs more staff, increased funding from the federal government and greater accountability for that funding," she said.

Ms Kearney said the ANF is running its **Because We Care** campaign to highlight the inequities in aged care and to gain improvements in both working conditions for aged care workers to ensure quality care for older Australians. At the ALP National Conference held recently in Sydney, the ANF launched a mass postcard campaign telling the Federal Government that it is time to deliver for aged care in budget 2010. Up to 240,000 Australians are expected to show support by sending postcards to their local MPs and Senators.

"Today is 'Equal Pay Day' and the government should take this opportunity to deliver for older Australians and improve wages and conditions in the aged care sector, a commitment they made at last month's ALP National Conference," Ms Kearney said.

The **Because We Care** campaign is aimed at raising awareness and recognition of Australia's highly skilled and dedicated aged care nursing and care workforce, by focusing on:

- The right balance of skills and nursing hours so that nursing and care staff can provide quality care for every resident.
- Fair pay for aged care nurses and care staff.
- Recognition of the professional skills of Assistants in Nursing and care staff through a national licensing system.
- A guarantee that taxpayer funding is used for nursing and personal care for each resident.

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