



## MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS, NURSING, AGED CARE, POLITICS

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### Funding accountability and quality care in Aged Care must be the Federal Government's priorities

The Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) today welcomed the Senate Standing Committee report into residential and community aged care and acknowledged the report's focus on funding and the financial viability of the sector but warns that without full and transparent accountability of the use of taxpayers' funds in the sector any reforms will fail.

Ged Kearney, ANF Federal Secretary said that while the ANF applauds the recommendation to establish a properly costed benchmark of care cost, it will mean nothing if we do not insist on proper acquittal of care funding. The recommended review of audited financial reports from nursing homes must take priority.

"It is also important the residents in nursing homes receive the very best care that our nurses and carers can give" Ms Kearney said.

"What we desperately need is more nursing staff and the right mix of worker skills across the aged care sector. Residents in nursing homes require complex nursing care for high levels of health needs. Having the right mix of registered and enrolled nurses and carers is essential to ensure that all needs are met."

"To do that the sector must be able to pay competitive wages and ensure the resources are there to give the best care."

The ANF calls on the Australian government to develop a benchmark staffing guide to establish minimum staffing and skill levels. "This could easily be developed based on resident care needs using data already collected by ACFI (Aged Care Funding Instrument)" Ms Kearney said.

"While we welcome the suggested review of the current staffing challenges in aged care we are concerned that nurses and carers are right now struggling to maintain a high level of quality care and demand immediate action."

The ANF has launched the **Because We Care** campaign – quality care for older Australians calling for openness and accountability in the way taxpayer funds are spent, fair pay for nurses and care staff in aged care who are now paid up to \$300 a week less than nurses in other sectors, the right balance of skills and working hours so that nurses and care staff can provide quality care, and recognition of the professional skills of assistants in nursing and care staff through a national licensing system.

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