



**because
we care**
Quality care for older Australians

National Media Release

Embargoed until 5.00am Tuesday, March 17, 2009

THE “*BECAUSE WE CARE*” NATIONAL AGED CARE CAMPAIGN

More aged care nursing staff with the right mix of nursing skills and increased Federal Government funding, are the main objectives of a new, national campaign to be launched by the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) today.

ANF national secretary Ged Kearney said the **Because We Care** campaign is aimed at raising the awareness and recognition level of Australia’s highly skilled and dedicated aged care nursing and care workforce, focusing on:

1. The right balance of skills and nursing hours so that nursing and care staff can provide quality care for every resident.
2. Fair pay for aged care nurses and care staff who are paid up to \$300 per week less than nurses in other sectors.
3. Recognition of the professional skills of Assistants in Nursing and care staff through a national licensing system.
4. A guarantee that taxpayer funding is used for nursing and personal care for each resident.

Ms Kearney said the campaign would “target” all Federal MPs, Senators and Ministers, with supporters around Australia urged to send an on-line message to the Minister for Ageing Justine Elliot - calling on the Federal Government to properly fund aged care.

“We desperately need nursing staff with the right mix of nursing skills and increased Federal Government funding, with greater accountability for that funding,” she said.

“Fact is, nurses working in aged care are paid significantly less than their counterparts in other sectors, on average \$300 a week less, which is one of reasons we’re having difficulty recruiting nursing staff to the industry.”

The **Because We Care** Campaign will involve the ANF’s state and territory branches, including the QNU and the NSWNA – with the support of over 170,000 nursing members around Australia.

AUSTRALIAN NURSING FEDERATION

Unit 3, 28 Eyre St Kingston ACT 2604, Tel 02 6232 6533 Fax 02 6232 6610

www.becausewecare.org.au



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Through the campaign the ANF will call on the support of key stakeholders across the industry, including union members and non-unionised nursing staff, the operators of aged care, residents and families, individual facilities and the wider community.

Tens of thousands of '*Charters for Quality Aged Care*' will be distributed to workers, residents and families at aged care facilities across Australia, to ask them to support the **Because We Care** objectives.

A DVD, featuring real life aged care workers and residents talking about "*the industry they love and the funding the need*", will also be shown in hundreds of facilities around Australia and unveiled at a launch in Parliament House for MPs and Senators from around Australia.

Sydney Director of Nursing Lucille McKenna, who will address the Parliamentarians at the launch, said she was supporting the **Because We Care** campaign in a bid to retain and recruit nursing staff.

"It's so important to keep nurses in aged care because if we lose them out of the sector, we won't be able to get them back," Ms McKenna, a 40-year veteran of the industry, said today.

Brisbane Assistant in Nursing Alba Vignolo said "*old people deserve the very best of care*".

For further information, to view the DVD or to send an online message to the Minister, log onto www.becausewecare.org.au.

The **Because We Care** campaign will be unveiled at Parliament House Canberra today (**Tuesday, March 17**).

BECAUSE WE CARE LAUNCH
11.30 am, Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Private Dining Room 1 & 4,
Parliament House, Canberra.

Media inquiries or for interviews with Ged Kearney, Lucille McKenna or Alba Vignolo, call: Libby Muir, from the ANF on 0413 834 979.

Media interviews will be available following the launch at 12.30pm at the Senate Courtyard.

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