



## media release

7 October 2009

### Aged Care Nurses need your support

Hundreds of nurses will hold stalls and meet local MPs and ask people to sign postcards as part of the Australian Nursing Federation's *Because We Care* National Day of Action – the aim being to send our federal politicians the message that now is the time to fix aged care.

Ged Kearney, Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) today called on the community to get behind aged care nurses and their campaign for quality care for older Australians.

“Today aged care Nurses across Australia will be highlighting the importance of improving staffing levels, skills mix and wages for aged care staff.

“Some aged care nurses are paid up to \$300 a week less than nurses working in public hospitals.

“This has a huge impact on the recruitment of care staff to help nurse elderly residents in nursing homes.

“The National Day of Action will involve nurses handing out postcards and talking to members of the public at nearly 100 sites nationwide.

“We will be asking the community to get involved and support a better future for older Australians by supporting our *Because We Care* campaign.

“If you are a resident in a nursing home or have a family member living in a nursing home we are encouraging you to get down to one of our local activities and sign a postcard and show your support.

“This issue is vital for the future of Australia - with the ageing population expected to send demand for aged care services skyrocketing in the next decade.

“If we don't do more to recruit and keep our aged care nurses and personal carers then the quality of care they can deliver is going to be under great pressure.

“The ANF has a four point plan to address this critical issue.

“Firstly, we need to halt the exodus of Registered and Enrolled nurses from aged care and ensure our nursing homes have the right mix of staff to get the job done by introducing a minimum staffing ratio.

“Secondly, we need to lift skill levels across the board, from nurses to personal carers by ensuring there is a minimum qualification requirement and a well structured career path for nurses and personal carers.

“Thirdly, to get more people into the industry and to hold onto the excellent staff we already have, we need to increase pay.

“And finally, we need make sure that any extra funding from the Federal Government flows through to aged care staff so they can deliver the best care possible – that means proper acquittal processes for aged care funding,” Ms Kearney said.

### Background

Australia today has some 2,800 residential aged care facilities providing care to more than 160,000 elderly people, 70 per cent of whom receive high-level care and 55 percent of whom are 85 years of age or older.

By 2020 the number of residents is projected to reach more than 250,000 – a 56 percent increase.

And the highest area of growth will be among residents aged 95 or over who will need the highest level of care we can give them.

The high-care proportion of residential aged care is going to need to almost triple in the next 25 years to keep up with demand.

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 care staff for each resident.

### Media inquiries:

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The ANF, with 170,000 members, is the professional and industrial voice for nurses and midwives in Australia

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#### ANF Journals

Australian Nursing Journal  
Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing  
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