



media release

16 October 2009

Thousands of reasons to support aged care reform

An excess of 15,000 charters signed by the community and aged care workers calling on the Federal Government to properly fund aged care were handed over to the Federal Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot MP today at Amaroo Aged Care Facility in Tweed Heads.

Ged Kearney, Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) said thousands of concerned people had signed the ANF's "Charter for Quality Aged Care".

"There is a huge groundswell of support behind the ANF's campaign to boost funding for aged care in the next Federal budget.

"The Prime Minister has committed to major reform of our health system to fix systemic problems and to deal with the ageing population.

"Residential and community aged care must be at the top of the list for reform.

"If you fix aged care you will go a long way to fixing public hospitals by preventing admissions of older Australians and by allowing safer, early discharge to nursing homes that have the qualified staff to care for them.

"The ANF believes that key reforms must be made in aged care to boost the numbers of nurses and trained staff and to halt a decade long decline in their numbers.

"We need to adopt minimum staffing levels and close the \$300 a week pay gap between aged care staff and those working in public hospitals.

"This issue will only worsen with the ageing population expected to send demand for aged care services skyrocketing in the next decade.

"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.

Background

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.

Throughout 2009 the ANF has been asking community members, nursing home staff, friends and relatives of residents to sign the "Charter for Quality Aged Care".

The Charter calls on the Federal Government to properly fund aged care and support the campaign's four key objectives;

- 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 care staff for each resident.

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

The industrial and professional organisation for nurses and midwives in Australia

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