



MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS, NURSING, AGED CARE, POLITICS

Monday, June 1, 2009

AUSTRALIAN NURSING FEDERATION CALLS FOR AUSTRALIA'S NURSING HOMES TO BE GOVERNMENT PRIORITY

In response to reports of an increase in the number of serious complaints to the Department of Health and Ageing's Complaints Investigation Scheme (CIS) Ged Kearney, Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) Federal Secretary said the Australian government must make Australia's nursing homes a priority.

"It is terrible to hear reports of frail older Australians coming to harm when they so clearly deserve to be treated with the utmost dignity, respect and care."

Ms Kearney said Australia's nursing homes mainly provided high standards of care but she acknowledged that there was pressure on the industry and said that there would not be a single solution to the problems in aged care.

"Aged care needs a coordinated approach bringing solutions to key areas of need which is why the ANF is running the **because we care** campaign."

Ms Kearney said the main aims of the ANF's national campaign include:

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.

"Without the right numbers and mix of skilled and educated assistants in nursing, enrolled and registered nurses in aged care we are concerned that nursing homes will remain under pressure," Ms Kearney said.

Ms Kearney said any discussion on aged care reform must include the voice of nursing staff working in aged care who keep older Australians well and in the community with dignity and compassion.

"Aged care is not babysitting, it is not a lifestyle choice, and it cannot be run on the smell of an oily rag. Older people in nursing homes have complex health needs that demand high quality care. Many things are uncertain in this life but there is no escaping old age."

Media inquiries:

Ged Kearney, ANF Federal Secretary 0417 053 322
Lee Thomas, ANF Assistant Federal Secretary 0419 576 590

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

Canberra Office

Unit 3, 28 Eyre Street Kingston ACT 2604 Australia
PO Box 4239 Kingston ACT 2604 Australia
(T) + 61 2 6232 6533 (F) + 61 2 6232 6610
anfcanberra@anf.org.au

Melbourne Office

Level 1, 365 Queen Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia
(T) + 61 3 9602 8500 (F) + 61 3 9602 8567
anfmelbourne@anf.org.au

ANF Journals

Australian Nursing Journal
Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing
anj@anf.org.au ajan@anf.org.au
ABN 41 816 898 298