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Quality care for older Australians

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media release

Nurses bring aged care reform debate to Canberra

Aged care nurses and nursing home residents from across Australia are coming to Canberra to issue a united plea to the Federal Government: make Budget 2010 the aged care budget.

ANF Federal Secretary Ged Kearney, together with 20 concerned aged care nurses and residents, will meet with MP's and Senators to push for increased funding to improve the aged care workforce.

"Some nursing homes have one nurse for every 30 residents and it's going to get worse," she said.

"The Government's projection that there will be 1.8 million people aged 85+ by 2050, will mean residents in this age group will increase from just over 87,000 today to more than 400,000 by 2050."

"High need residents will suffer greatly if there is only one nurse for every 30, 60, 90 or 120 residents. This generation can't sit on their hands and do nothing. Budget 2010 provides a real opportunity for the Federal Government to stop the long term slide in the number of nurses and carers working in aged care."

"Unless there is a serious injection of funding into the aged care sector people currently aged over 45, who expect there will be nurses to look after them when they are older, may instead find themselves without nurses to care for them."

"On top of the massive growth in the ageing population it is also estimated 1.1 million older Australians will suffer from dementia by 2050."

"One reason nurses are leaving the aged care sector is because they are paid on average \$300 a week less than nurses in the public hospital sector. Aged care nurses feel their work is undervalued."

"Without the right number of nurses and carers in nursing homes, high need residents will unnecessarily flood hospital emergency departments. More and more elderly Australians will languish in acute hospital beds when they could have been managed more appropriately in their nursing home."

Ms Kearney said the aged care nurses and residents visiting Canberra from across Australia would be available for interviews and photos.

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