



media release

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More beds without enough nurses doesn't make sense

The future care of vulnerable elderly residents in nursing homes rests on an increase in qualified staff - more people in beds without more nurses will equal chaos and misery.

Australian Nursing Federation Federal Secretary Ged Kearney said recent threats by aged care providers who are demanding \$500 million in Government funding to provide more places for residents needs to be balanced against the needs for more nurses and personal carers.

"While we endorse a call for more beds the idea of increasing the number of residents without tackling staff shortages is frightening," she said.

"We trust that the Federal Government will address the current shortage of aged care nurses as stipulated in the Because We Care campaign as a first priority towards improved quality of care for senior Australians."

"The ANF will submit its 2010 budget proposal next week. This will address the need to attract more aged care nurses into the sector by ensuring they receive fair pay and conditions - many are now earning up to \$300 less than nurses in other sectors."

"The right balance of skills and nursing hours is required to care for the 70 per cent of aged care residents who are high-need."

"It is vital that the public gets a guarantee that taxpayer funding provided to aged care providers is transparent and used to improve wages and provide enough nursing and care staff for each resident."

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.

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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