



## media release

10 March 2010

### Nurses to make aged care an election year issue

The massive \$300 wages gap between aged care and public hospital nurses is set to become an election year issue with the launch of a national advertising campaign by the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) and the NSW Nurses' Association (NSWNA).

Ged Kearney, Federal Secretary of the ANF and Brett Holmes, General Secretary of the NSWNA today launched the nurse's \$3 million election year campaign with a call for the Rudd Government to inject funding into the aged care system.

"This is a plea from the heart. Older Australians deserve the best possible care.

"If we don't inject more money into aged care in this budget I fear the nurses won't be there to care for them in the future.

"From 2003 to 2007 the number of aged care residents has increased by 15,000 while the number of nurses has actually declined by 4,000.

"The ratio of staff to residents went from 5.2 in 2003 to 6.7 in 2007 - 28% increase in just four years.

"In the next ten years Access Economics has projected for it to double to 12.1 residents per staff member.

"In fact in some aged care facilities nurses are already expected today to care for up to 60 residents.

"The massive decline in nursing numbers is driven by the close to \$300 wages gap and the lack of minimum staffing numbers in aged care.

"Aged care nurses are fed up and want the community to help them in an election year," Ms Kearney said.

NSWNA General Secretary Brett Holmes said the campaign launched today would highlight the great work our nurses and caring staff do in aged care but it comes with the message - fix aged care or we will lose them.

"We will follow up this advertising campaign by asking the Australian community for support by going to [www.becausewecare.org.au](http://www.becausewecare.org.au) and sending a message to federal MPs that more funding is vital for aged care.

Mr Holmes also said that nurses will be visiting workplaces, hospitals, nursing homes and their neighbours to generate a tidal wave of support for a better deal for aged care nurses and carers.

## Key Facts

- In 2003 there were 27,210 (FTE) registered and enrolled nurses in the aged care system.
- In 2007 that number dropped to 23,103 (FTE) - a decline of more than 4,000.
- In 2003 the number of people in residential aged care was 140,297.
- In 2007 the number of people in residential aged care was 154,549 - an increase of around 15,000.

## New South Wales and Queensland

### Nurses Weekly Salary Rates - Awards and Enterprise Bargaining Agreements

State	Classification	Public Hospitals (\$)	Aged Care (\$)	Difference (\$)
NSW	AIN Yr 5*	747.20	670.70	76.50
NSW	RN1 Yr8^	1330.60	1137.34	193.26
QLD	AIN Yr 5*	860.85	713.69	147.16
QLD	RN1 Yr8^	1291.65	878.92	412.73

\*Assistant in Nursing Year 5

^Registered Nurse Level 1 Year 8

## Media inquiries:

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#### ANF Journals

Australian Nursing Journal  
Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing  
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