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nursing federation

Media release

Nurses lodge first class action under Fair Work Act to protect aged care nurses

25 March, 2010

The Australian Nursing Federation (ANF), NSW Nurses' Association (NSWNA) and the Queensland Nurses' Union (QNU) have today applied to Fair Work Australia for the first class action take home pay orders to protect the wages of aged care nurses in Queensland and NSW.

ANF Federal Secretary, Ged Kearney said today's application will ensure unscrupulous employers cannot use the award modernisation process to cut the wages of hard working staff.

"This application will cover more than 400 named aged care providers in Queensland and NSW," Ms Kearney said.

"This is the first time a union has used these provisions to protect workers across a large number of employers.

"Instead of waiting for employers to cut workers wages we are getting in first to ensure they are protected.

NSWNA Branch Secretary Brett Holmes and QNU branch secretary Gay Hawksworth said we will not tolerate any nurse going backwards.

"NSW and Queensland branches have fought hard over the years to get a better deal for their members.

Mr Holmes said "Not only will we be using take home pay orders but we will be using the new bargaining system in the Fair Work Act to get more for our members."

Ms Hawksworth said "Aged care employers needed to understand that with an ageing population more nurses were needed and if they don't play by the rules then nurses will look elsewhere for employment."

The new modern award starts on July 1. Under the Fair Work Act employees must apply to protect the wages through take pay home orders.

Ms Kearney said this application was consistent with the government's objective that no worker has their take home pay reduced as a result of the award modernisation process.

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