

## Supporting facts on RN24/7

- The state government's decision to remove the legal requirement in the *Public Health Act 2010* to have at least ONE registered nurse to be on site at all times at facilities where there are people with high care needs goes against the recommendations from the 2016 inquiry into *registered nurses in NSW nursing homes*, which received unanimous cross party support to keep them.
- At an average age of 83.5, Australians entering aged care facilities are older and frailer than ever before, many with chronic and complex care needs that require the skills of an RN.
- Registered nurses are a fundamental part of the structure that supports an efficient and fair staffing model. By removing RNs, that staffing structure will fracture, effectively putting an end to the requirement to have a Director of Nursing to oversee care and preventing Enrolled Nurses from operating within their professional scope of practice.
- Just some of the reasons RNs are vital in aged care facilities:
  - Overseeing medications, including assessing side effects
  - Undertaking nursing procedures, including urinary catheters, naso-gastric tubes, wound care
  - Minimising unnecessary transfers to Emergency Departments
  - Providing palliative care at the nursing home
  - Providing support and supervision to ENs and AiNs
- More than 270,500 Australians were living in residential aged care at some point over the 2013-14 financial year and the ageing baby boomers will see that number rise at a record rate over the coming years. Despite this industry boom, the future of Australia's aged care sector is in limbo with increasing uncertainty around funding and staffing. We're at a turning point and whatever steps we take next will play a crucial role in developing a sustainable, quality system that can handle future pressures
- Eight of the top 10 locations calling for an emergency ambulance in 2015 were nursing homes. We can't afford to increase this figure by referring tasks that could be carried out by RNs in aged care facilities to our struggling emergency departments, putting further strain on our overstretched public hospital system
- The federal government's 2016 budget cut \$1.2 billion from funding for nursing home residents with complex care needs over the next four years "to stabilise higher than expected growth". The reduction in government funding prompted some providers to publicly state that this decision would mean they would need to cut RNs from their staff
- Both the federal funding cuts and NSW legislation changes are a recipe for disaster in NSW, promoting a dangerous model of care. Without RNs in aged care there will be more pressure on staff to take on tasks they are not trained to do. It's important to retain a skill mix that encourages cooperation and doesn't put staff at risk of exploitation from providers
- According to Deloitte's report *Australia's aged care sector: economic contribution and future directions* commissioned by the Aged Care Guild, skills shortages are the greatest for RNs in residential aged care, with over 62% of all facilities reporting a shortage
- The NSWNMA is fighting for ratios in aged care that enforce guaranteed staff ratios and mandated nursing and care hours for each resident

- We now have the answer for a sustainable aged care workforce. The *National Aged Care Staffing and Skills Mix Project* report was undertaken by the ANMF in conjunction with the ANMF South Australian Branch, the Flinders University Research Team and the University of South Australia to collect evidence around staffing levels in Australian aged care (insert link to report)
  
- The key findings are:
  - Residents should receive an average 4 hours and 18 minutes of care per day – compared to the 2.84 hours which is currently being provided;
  - A skills mix of Registered Nurses (RN) 30%, Enrolled Nurses (EN) 20% and Assistant in Nursing/Personal Care Worker (AIN/PCA) 50% is the minimum skills mix to ensure safe residential care