



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Calls for registered nurses to remain on duty 24/7 in nursing homes

This Tuesday and Wednesday, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) will be in Orange to speak with nurses and local community groups about the essential role of registered nurses in aged care.

The NSWNMA is raising awareness of its campaign and petition, calling on the state government to extend the legal minimum requirement for NSW aged care facilities to have a registered nurse on duty at all times, which is under threat of removal.

Currently, the *NSW Public Health Act 2010* requires nursing homes to have a minimum of one registered nurse on duty per shift. Changes to the federal *Aged Care Act 1997* in July 2014 affected the state law, prompting a review of the requirement.

The Ministry of Health is consulting with the aged care sector through a Steering Committee and will hand down a report in coming months. The Health Minister is due to make a decision on the future of the requirement in the second half of this year.

Manager of Member Organising at NSWNMA, Lisa Kremmer, said local nurses were seeking support from the Orange community to help lobby government over the issue.

"We've collected more than 7,500 signatures on our petition so far and we'd really like the people of Orange and surrounding districts to help us hit 10,000 signatures," Ms Kremmer said.

"Registered nurses in aged care provide skilled, clinical care to residents with complex and high level needs. This includes specialist nursing procedures, managing acute illnesses and changes in condition, providing pain relief and palliative care, and minimising discomfort and distress.

"On site clinical care by registered nurses can prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and the added burden to already-stretched ambulance and public hospital systems. The role of registered nurses in nursing homes is a vital part of the NSW health system."

The NSWNMA will continue to highlight the importance of transferring the requirement for registered nurses and directors of nursing in aged care permanently into NSW legislation, to ensure a registered nurse is on duty at all times in all NSW nursing homes.

NSWNMA Organisers Rita Martin and Margaret Burgess will be in Orange today (Tuesday 26/5) and tomorrow (Wednesday 27/5) to discuss the quality of local aged care services.

Community members are encouraged to write to Health Minister Jillian Skinner on this issue and to circulate the [petition](#) amongst peers, family and friends.

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