



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

General Secretary: Brett Holmes | Assistant General Secretary: Judith Kiejda

☎ (02) 8595 1234 | 🌐 www.facebook.com/nswnma | 🐦 twitter.com/nswnma

10 September, 2015

Community gathers for debate on RNs in aged care

Members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) will today gather outside NSW Parliament with community groups, local government representatives, aged care workers and relatives, ahead of a debate on the future of registered nurses in aged care in NSW.

Community support has continued to build across the state, which prompted a petition of more than 10,000 signatures presented to the parliament back in June. A further 14,000 signatures were handed over to local state MPs in Dubbo, Tweed and Wagga Wagga earlier this week.

Prior to the scheduled parliamentary debate on the 10,000 signature petition this afternoon, community representatives will rally outside Parliament House and discuss their first-hand experiences of aged care in NSW.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said carers, aged care advocates and workers would all highlight the importance of retaining the current requirement for registered nurses to be on duty at all times in NSW nursing homes.

"The requirement for registered nurses to be employed 24/7 in our state's nursing homes and for a director of nursing to be appointed is vital to ensure high quality care is being afforded to some of the most vulnerable people in our community," Mr Holmes said.

"The comprehensive evidence and widespread community support for this legal requirement to stay in place should be crystal clear for the NSW Health Minister – she has a duty of care to act on behalf of the residents in aged care, their families, carers and all aged care staff – it is imperative."

The Health Minister passed an amendment in June 2014 to keep the requirement temporarily in place while the Ministry of Health conducted consultations with the aged care sector and stakeholders. The requirement is under threat due to changes to Commonwealth aged care laws.

In addition, an Upper House inquiry was launched in June 2015 into registered nurses in NSW nursing homes. Almost 80 per cent of the 165 written submissions have called for the legal requirement to stay. The Committee is due to hand down its report by the end of October.

The Health Minister is expected to make a decision of the future of the requirement for registered nurses in all NSW nursing homes following the conclusion of the Upper House inquiry.

MEDIA ALERT: Media are invited to attend the rally outside NSW Parliament at 3.30pm TODAY, Thursday 10 September 2015. Three community speakers will address the crowd. Participants will then view the petition debate from the Chamber public gallery from 4.30pm.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Brett Holmes, General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 550 324

Gia Hayne, Media Advisor, NSWNMA 0488 015 317