



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW Government shuts down debate on RNs in aged care

Around 100 people gathered outside NSW Parliament yesterday afternoon to support a campaign to keep registered nurses on duty at all times in NSW nursing homes. The rally was followed by a debate in the Legislative Assembly regarding the 10,000 signature petition tabled in June.

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) campaign calls on the NSW Government to retain a legal requirement for a registered nurse to be on duty 24/7 in all aged care facilities with high-care residents. The requirement is at risk following changes to Commonwealth aged care laws.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, addressed the crowd of state MPs, community groups, local government representatives, aged care workers and relatives about the importance of delivering high quality care to all residents of aged care.

"Our state politicians have an opportunity to take their responsibilities seriously when it comes to looking after some of the most dependent, frail, aged people in our community – the people who need the oversight and expertise of registered nurses in their final days or years of life," Mr Holmes said.

"The loss of this legislation would simply mean that we would rely on the 'good will' of aged care providers, who in many cases are there to make a profit – we know it and they know it."

Carers, aged care workers and palliative care advocates also spoke of the desperate need to maintain the appropriate skill-mix of staff in aged care facilities, including how teams led by a registered nurse can reduce unnecessary hospitalisations and provide quality clinical care onsite.

Inside the Legislative Assembly Chamber, a robust debate took place regarding the 10,000 signature petition, witnessed by a packed public gallery of residents from across the state.

Blue Mountains MP Trish Doyle, Londonderry MP Prue Car and Balmain MP Jamie Parker all spoke in support of the NSWNMA's petition, urged the NSW Government to protect the legal requirement under new legislation and acknowledged the widespread concerns of local constituents.

NSW Government representatives, including the Member for Holsworthy Melanie Gibbons and Oatley MP Mark Couré, used their allocated discussion time to outline the number of nurses and midwives working in the broader public health system, as well as a preference for the Commonwealth to maintain responsibility for the entire aged care system.

Community members expressed their disappointment when the NSW Government moved to shut down the debate after additional time was sought by members of the Opposition. They were also disappointed by the failure of the NSW Health Minister to attend and contribute to the discussion.

The NSW Health Minister is expected to make a decision on the future of the legal requirement for registered nurses in aged care following the conclusion of an Upper House inquiry and a Steering Committee consultation process.



A total of more than 24,000 signatures have since been collected on the NSWNMA's campaign petition.

NB: Community speakers from the rally, including Lucille McKenna (Director of Nursing in aged care), Margaret Zanghi (Carer and President of Quality Aged Care Action Group), Yvonne McMasters (Palliative Care advocate) and Des Hartree (Carer) are available for interviews.

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