



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION **MEDIA RELEASE**

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16 February, 2016

Calls for action to address elder abuse in aged care

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has called on all levels of government to proactively reduce and prevent incidents of elder abuse occurring in residential aged care facilities.

In its report *'Who will keep me safe? Elder Abuse in Residential Aged Care'*, the NSWNMA identifies the provision of adequate staffing and skill-mix as the top priority for aged care providers to help tackle the issue of resident to resident and resident to staff abuse.

Acting General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Judith Kiejda, said a recent survey of aged care sector members had uncovered major concerns about the prevalence and management of elder abuse.

"Our members have confirmed that resident to resident abuse accounts for a large percentage of incidents observed in these aged care settings," Ms Kiejda said.

"More than 20 per cent of aged care nurses we spoke to said they witnessed resident to resident abuse once or twice a week, while almost 30 per cent had seen some form of resident to staff abuse in the same period.

"Alarming, more than 90 per cent of nurses surveyed have been subject to some form of aggression from residents in their workplace.

"We're talking about physical abuse such as hitting, pushing, kicking, as well as verbal abuse in these residential aged care facilities.

"A key problem identified is that this sort of behaviour has become normalised in the aged care sector.

"Not all incidents of elder abuse are being reported, management may not be taking steps to prevent or reduce these incidents and some aged care providers simply leave it to the 'too hard' basket."

The NSWNMA report said most people who suffer abuse within residential aged care facilities were residents or staff, caused by those who lack power or are most at risk of abuse themselves. For example, people with cognitive impairment who are unlikely to be held accountable for their actions.

"The current reporting of elder abuse in residential aged care settings in NSW requires urgent change," said Ms Kiejda.

"We are calling for better staff training and the establishment of a federal regulatory framework so that aged care providers clearly understand what constitutes elder abuse and outlines best practices to eliminate it."

Ms Kiejda said the NSWNMA would highlight the concerns of its members and the findings of its report during an upcoming public hearing of the NSW Legislative Council's ['Inquiry into Elder Abuse in NSW'](#).



The NSWNMA confirmed it would continue to campaign to eliminate elder abuse from residential aged care settings and raise awareness on the issues affecting older Australians and their caregivers.

Download a copy of the report '*Who will keep me safe? Elder Abuse in Residential Aged Care*' [here](#).

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