



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Audit reveals unsafe conditions at nursing homes in Sydney's east

As 4 Corners aired the second part of its investigation into failings in aged care, an audit of select nursing homes in Sydney's eastern suburbs uncovered shocking understaffing and associated neglect.

All eight aged care facilities visited by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) in the federal electorate of Wentworth last night failed to provide an acceptable level of nursing care per resident.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes said the ratio of nurses to residents was nowhere near what it should be.

"Our audit of just eight facilities revealed an average ratio of one Registered Nurse to 68 residents on night shift, which is not what families expect or residents deserve. These are vulnerable people needing around the clock care."

Mr Holmes said the audit was just a snapshot of what is happening in aged care facilities across the country.

"The data retrieved from last night proves how widespread the staffing issues are in aged care – even in the most wealthy, affluent suburbs."

The poorest ratio uncovered was just one Registered Nurse to 84 residents. Documented examples of missed care as a result of understaffing included missed medications, increased falls, limited time to complete hygiene cares and the inability to mobilise residents as often as needed.

In addition to staffing issues, restrictions on incontinence pads worsened conditions, with most allocating just three pads (one per shift) per resident per day, regardless of the circumstances.

The NSWNMA is part of a national campaign for mandated staff to resident ratios to ensure safe staffing levels and an adequate skills mix.

Last year, the six biggest for-profit aged care providers received over \$2.17 billion in tax payer subsidies, which accounted for around 70% of their revenue. Currently there is no requirement for providers to report how government money is spent or guarantee that it be tied to care.

"This is a sector whose providers profit over \$1 billion a year, receives healthy government subsidies, large resident deposits and fortnightly part-pension payments, yet it still has no guaranteed staffing or reporting requirements," said Mr Holmes.

The audit comes just a week after Prime Minister, Scott Morrison announced a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.



“There have been 20 inquiries into aged care in the last 20 years. It’s a sector that clearly warrants a Royal Commission, however, we already know that safe staffing needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. There must be mandated staff to resident ratios if we’re to fix the crisis in aged care,” said Mr Holmes.

The NSWNMA is calling on all federal politicians to support ratios in aged care. Labor candidate for Wentworth, Tim Murray will meet with NSWNMA members on Wednesday morning at 9:15am in Bondi Junction to pledge his support for ratios ahead of next month’s by-election.

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