



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pioneer House staff cuts leave residents vulnerable

A recent staffing restructure at the Mudgee based residential aged care facility, Pioneer House, has prompted renewed calls for the Federal Government to urgently introduce mandated ratios in aged care.

Members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) have raised serious concerns for the welfare of residents, as well as their own personal safety while on-shift, at Pioneer House.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said the not-for-profit community based facility had a duty of care to ensure a high standard of resident safety and also to deliver adequate staffing.

"Unfortunately, our members are reporting ongoing incidents of missed care and also situations where they themselves are working in unsafe conditions, such as in isolation," Mr Holmes said.

"Residents with high care needs, and their families, deserve to know whether or not they are receiving the high level of care they require.

"It's disappointing local management chose to cut an Assistant in Nursing position from all morning and afternoon shifts, without taking into consideration the concerns of our members for the delivery of care to residents. This has only exacerbated the current workload issues being experienced at the site.

"Unsafe workloads, a lack of support from management and fears around resident safety are a recipe for disaster in any aged care setting.

"These are just some of the comments we've received from our members at Pioneer House –

"When we have fewer staff the buzzers go unanswered for longer... We're worried that the residents aren't getting proper care."

"When we don't have enough staff on the morning shift, it can be quite late by the time we get residents out of bed. This has serious impacts for their ability to socialise with other residents."

"I leave work worried that I haven't done a good job. I think about leaving some days because it's so bad."

"Even before the cuts they weren't replacing staff. We worry that now with even fewer staff it's only going to get worse."

Mr Holmes said the NSWNMA had filed a dispute in the Fair Work Commission against Pioneer House for failing to consult over its staffing restructure.

He said NSWNMA members had called on management to maintain residents' safety as a priority and also requested an adequate casual staff pool be established to help replace any leave.



“Safety and quality within our aged care sector is paramount, and not just because the Royal Commission into Aged Care is underway,” said Mr Holmes.

The NSWNMA is part of a national campaign calling for mandated ratios in aged care to address widespread staffing issues across the sector.

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