



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Aged care resident falls on the rise

The number of aged care residents hospitalised due to falls has continued to rise in NSW, putting extra pressure on already stretched public hospitals and renewing calls for minimum staff to resident ratios in the aged care sector.

A [report released by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association](#) (NSWNMA) has revealed 94 per cent of aged care workers surveyed had transferred a resident to hospital for treatment after a fall in the past year alone.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said, alarmingly, 75 per cent of the same aged care workers indicated those falls could have been avoided if minimum staff to resident ratios existed in their residential aged care facility.

"Understaffing has reached crisis levels in the aged care sector, particularly in terms of highly skilled nursing staff numbers being depleted," Mr Holmes said.

"Nurses and care staff are doing their best in impossible circumstances but too often they're run off their feet and cannot provide the safe level of care they want to give.

"A recent survey of our aged care members shows 43 per cent were employed in a facility with only one registered nurse (RN) per shift to care for 50 to 100 residents; while 8 per cent told us they had only one RN per shift for 100 to 150 residents and 2 per cent said they regularly had one RN for over 150 residents.

"These figures speak volumes about the urgent need for an adequate staffing methodology, which considers the right levels of staffing and skills mix/qualifications, in residential aged care facilities.

"It also suggests the risk of falls in these facilities can be reduced, if the ratio of registered nurses to residents is higher.

"We've all heard some of the horror stories unearthed during the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and it's still relatively early days.

"The Royal Commission is due to run a further twelve months but we know changes need to be considered and implemented now.

"The aged care sector is in crisis and we have part of the solution; the federal government must mandate minimum staff to resident ratios across the aged care sector," said Mr Holmes.

The NSWNMA is part of a national campaign calling on all federal politicians to support ratios in aged care [www.ratiosforagedcare.com.au](http://www.ratiosforagedcare.com.au).

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