



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

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## Bleak aged care nutrition requires food for thought

Aged care nurses have called for nutritional care standards to be bolstered and for safe staffing to be introduced to achieve better health outcomes throughout residential aged care facilities.

A report '[Food for Thought: Nutrition & Hydration in Resident Aged Care](#)' released by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) highlights the increased risk of malnutrition among aged care residents due to poor nutritional meals and a skeleton workforce.

NSWNMA Acting General Secretary, Judith Kiejda, said 35% of aged care members reported they didn't have enough time to help a resident eat or drink as a result of competing workloads.

"This report paints a very stark picture of daily life for aged care residents," Ms Kiejda said.

"Mealtime, which should provide social engagement and enjoyment for residents, is often hampered by understaffing.

"Age care residents are more prone to becoming malnourished, dehydrated and deprived of an opportunity to connect with others because the majority of nursing staff are being run off their feet.

"It is worrying that 29% of our members surveyed had transferred a resident to hospital due to dehydration or malnutrition within the past year.

"We also know skills mix is also a contributing factor, particularly in residential aged care facilities with only one registered nurse employed for over 150 residents. Staff in these facilities were 12% more likely to lack the time to help residents eat and drink, compared to facilities with a ratio of one registered nurse to less than 50 residents.

"Nutrition is not a luxury item, it is an essential element of basic care and a human right.

"Without adequate nurse staffing, guidance and regulation our elderly are not receiving the care and compassion they should be afforded in residential aged care settings," said Ms Kiejda.

The NSWNMA is part of an ongoing national campaign for minimum staff to resident ratios to be introduced across the aged care sector. For details visit [www.ratiosforagedcare.com.au](http://www.ratiosforagedcare.com.au)

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