



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

General Secretary: Brett Holmes | Assistant General Secretary: Judith Kiejda

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Unsafe conditions and lack of accountability in for-profit aged care

An audit of select for-profit nursing homes in the NSW federal electorate of Dobell on Monday night uncovered shocking understaffing and associated neglect, less than 24 hours before the Senate Economics Reference Committee released a report into *Financial and tax practices of for-profit aged care providers*.

The results of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) audit found poor levels of nursing care per resident, despite the share in \$2.2 billion of annual government funding allocated to the six largest for-profit providers.

Even with generous tax-payer funded subsidies, 9 out of the 9 for-profit aged care facilities visited failed to provide an acceptable level of nursing care per resident, averaging one Registered Nurse to 85 residents on night shift. The poorest ratio uncovered was just one Registered Nurse to 138 residents.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes said there was no excuse for these large for-profit aged care facilities to withhold a safe level of nursing care.

"These companies are making hundreds of millions of dollars in annual profits, receiving billions in public funding and still, there are no measures in place to ensure public accountability and transparency when it comes to safe staffing," said Mr Holmes.

"This public money must be tied to care and the best way to do that is through mandated staffing ratios. It's the only way we'll get the best outcome for residents, their families and staff in aged care."

Mr Holmes said the central coast audit gave an indication of the widespread staffing issues across the state.

"Understaffing is rife – especially of highly skilled nursing staff. A recent report from the *Centre for International Corporate Tax Accountability and Research* found if for-profit aged care companies were more accountable and paid the taxes they should, there would be enough revenue to fix these staffing issues."

"The federal government must start putting measures in place to demand full disclosure and transparency. Without it, we are failing our elderly and allowing misuse of tax payers' money. We cannot wait for the outcome of a Royal Commission to start putting these systems in place. Aged care is in crisis and now we have part of the solution. It's as simple as that."

The NSWNMA is part of a national campaign, calling on all federal politicians to support ratios in aged care.

Yesterday, NSWNMA members rallied outside the office of Emma McBride, the federal member for Dobell. So far she has refused to pledge support for nurse to patient ratios in aged care.



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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Brett Holmes, General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 550 324

Danielle Mahoney, Media Advisor, NSWNMA 0459 880 178