



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

General Secretary: Brett Holmes | Assistant General Secretary: Judith Kiejda
P (02) 8595 1234 f www.facebook.com/nswnma t twitter.com/nswnma

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Bill to keep registered nurses in aged care tabled in NSW parliament today

Upper house cross benchers will today attempt to protect the requirement in the *Public Health Act 2010* to keep at least one registered nurse (RN) in a nursing home at all times.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will introduce a bill to stop the planned changes to state legislation and debate it in parliament today.

Last year, NSW Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, advised of her decision to remove the legal requirement for a registered nurse on site at all times in aged care facilities where there are people with high care needs.

Since then, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has joined with 20 state-based medical, nursing and community advocacy organisations to form a NSW Aged Care Roundtable. The roundtable members share concerns that the dilution of staffing and skills mix within residential aged care diminishes quality of care and has sent a co-signed letter to new Health Minister, Brad Hazzard, urging him to retain the legislation to keep registered nurses.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes said he was hopeful there would be support of the bill.

"The removal of the RN requirement in state legislation will have a devastating effect on the most vulnerable in our community, which is why we need this bill to block the changes," said Mr Holmes.

"If the government winds back longstanding legislation, we will see a downgrade in the quality of care at our nursing homes that are already tightening belts following federal funding cuts announced in the last budget.

"Removing highly qualified staff goes against all the recommendations from the inquiry into *registered nurses in NSW nursing homes* and would put more strain on our emergency departments when RNs are not on site to administer the care residents need."

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Brett Holmes, General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 550 324

Judith Kiejda, Assistant General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 674 119

Gia Hayne, Media Advisor, NSWNMA 0488 015 317