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MEDIA RELEASE

BUDGET 2010, NEWS, NURSING, AGED CARE, POLITICS

Aged care workers and residents big winners in Budget 2010

Ged Kearney, Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) said today that Budget 2010 had delivered a huge win for aged care nurses, care staff and the residents they care for.

“The \$132 million aged care workforce package announced by the Treasurer in Budget 2010 ensures nurses will remain front and centre in the delivery of aged care in Australia.

“We are thrilled with the \$60 million education incentive for aged care nurses. This will lead to thousands of nurses, assistants in nursing (AINs) and personal care workers upgrading their skills, helping them to stay working in the aged care sector and ensuring high quality care is delivered.

“This is vital given the number of nurses in aged care actually declined by 4,000 between 2003 to 2007 while the number of residents increased by 15,000 in that time.

“The introduction of a national licensing system for AINs and personal care workers will recognise their professionalism while ensuring high standards of care, safety and protection for residents.

“Almost \$19 million has been allocated for 25 nurse practitioners to work across 100 nursing homes. This will further the career pathway for nurses in aged care and greatly benefit residents in those homes.

“Both of these initiatives when linked with the 900 new nursing scholarships will dramatically improve the career options for aged care nurses and staff.

“The ANF has campaigned long and hard for recognition of aged care nurses and care staff through our **Because We Care** campaign and tonight the Federal Government has listened and taken some important first steps.

“A critical focus for our campaign is the introduction of minimum staffing levels in aged care. The government has tonight given that a huge boost with a commitment to undertake the detailed research that can inform the introduction of this long overdue reform.

“You can’t fix the problems in aged care overnight but this budget is a great start,” Ms Kearney said.

Canberra Office

Unit 3, 28 Eyre Street Kingston ACT 2604 Australia
PO Box 4239 Kingston ACT 2604 Australia
(T) + 61 2 6232 6533 (F) + 61 2 6232 6610
anfcanberra@anf.org.au

Melbourne Office

Level 1, 365 Queen Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia
(T) + 61 3 9602 8500 (F) + 61 3 9602 8567
anfmelbourne@anf.org.au

ANF Journals

Australian Nursing Journal
Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing
anj@anf.org.au ajan@anf.org.au
ABN 41 816 898 298



Background

Australia today has some 2,800 residential aged care facilities providing care to more than 160,000 elderly people, 70 per cent of whom receive high-level care and 55 percent of whom are 85 years of age or older.

By 2020 the number of residents is projected to reach more than 250,000 – a 56 percent increase.

And the highest area of growth will be among residents aged 95 or over who will need the highest level of care we can give them.

The high-care proportion of residential aged care is going to need to almost triple in the next 25 years to keep up with demand.

The latest snapshot of the Residential Aged Care workforce in 2007 shows 22,399 Registered Nurses, 16,293 enrolled nurses and 84,746 personal care workers employed in aged care.

The **Because We Care** campaign was launched by the Australian Nursing Federation in March 2009 and is aimed at raising awareness and recognition of Australia's highly skilled and dedicated aged care nursing and care workforce, by focusing on:

- The right balance of skills and nursing hours so that nursing and care staff can provide quality care for every resident.
- Fair pay for aged care nurses and care staff.
- Recognition of the professional skills of Assistants in Nursing and care staff through a national licensing system.
- A guarantee that taxpayer funding is used for nursing and personal care for each resident.

Ged Kearney, Federal Secretary	0417 053 322
Lee Thomas, Assistant Secretary	0419 576 590
Sue Bellino, Political Coordinator	0400 188 825
Eleni Hale, Media Adviser	0458 892 999

The ANF, with 175,000 members, is the professional and industrial voice for nurses and midwives in Australia. For more information, go to www.becausewecare.org.au.

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