

8 September 2015

Ms Rhia Victorino

Principal Council Officer

Parliament House

Macquarie Street

Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Ms Victorino

### **Registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes (Inquiry)**

The following information is provided following the appearance of UnitingCare NSW.ACT representatives at the above Inquiry. We request that the information contained in points 2 and 3 below be treated as commercial in confidence and only be provided to the members of the committee

#### **1. Transcript**

The transcript is accurate with the exception of the "95 per cent" which was recorded for Mr Teulan on P11 (please see marked-up copy). The number which we believe was stated was 92 per cent. That is also the correct figure.

#### **2. Quality – as expressed by resident satisfaction**

UnitingCare NSW.ACT uses a widely-used, validated instrument undertaken by Press Ganey to determine resident satisfaction in its residential aged care facilities. In the most recent survey of all of our residential aged care services, the following scores applied to services which do and don't have 24 hours per day, seven days per week onsite registered nurse cover:

	RN onsite 24/7	RN Not on-site 24/7
Mean	78.85	79.93
Median	79.20	79.90

There is no significant difference between the reported satisfaction of residents between the two groups of services.

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### 3. Registered nurses wage analysis

Please find attached a wages analysis between pay and other related remuneration benefits of UnitingCare in NSW and NSW public hospitals. It shows that the major wage disparity which has previously existed has been, and in 2016 will continue to be, eroded through successive pay increases to registered nurses in UnitingCare in excess of the increases provided by public hospitals. The superior salary packaging benefits available to registered nurses working at UnitingCare further reduces the remaining areas of relative pay disadvantage for the most experienced registered nurses. For other than the most experienced registered nurses, the pay rates of UnitingCare are higher than those applicable to public hospital employees.

### 4. Recommendations to the Committee

The recommendation from UnitingCare NSW.ACT is as follows:

- That the Federal Government should be allowed to undertake its comprehensive operational oversight of the aged care system **without** additional regulations related to staffing being included in NSW legislation (as applies in every other Australian State and Territory). Therefore, the existing requirement in relation to registered nurses in aged care facilities should be removed entirely.

If, contrary to that recommendation, the NSW Government does choose to add its own regulatory requirements to the Federal Government's comprehensive regulatory regime, we request that it consider the following:

- Any residual concerns could be addressed by requiring transparency for consumers as to whether 24 hours seven days per week onsite registered nurse coverage was available or not at the particular facility.
- If the NSW Government believed that registered nurse access 24 hours seven days per week was essential for residential aged care facilities, it should allow such access to be available via telephone or other electronic means, rather than requiring onsite presence.
- If the NSW Government was to apply the requirement for registered nurses onsite at all residential aged care services with residents classified as high care under the Aged Care Funding Instrument, it should allow a transition period of at least five years for services which were not previously subject to that requirement.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Steve Teulan

Director