

**Submission
No 34**

**INQUIRY INTO REGISTERED NURSES IN NEW SOUTH
WALES NURSING HOMES**

Name: Mrs Bevlyn Grant

Date received: 16/07/2015

I am a Registered Nurse with Master of Science in Dementia Care, and 40+ years experience in nursing. For the last eleven years I have worked in an aged care facility providing care to both High care and Low care residents.

I wish to bring to your attention serious gaps in providing care for our ageing Australian people. Rather than taking Registered Nurses out of caring for ageing Australians, I believe we should be encouraging more Registered Nurses into aged care.

Maintaining Registered Nurses in Aged Care

Care of elderly people is complex. The Registered Nurse has the expertise to assess care needs, report needs to the doctor and in many situations provide the care so the person is not transported to hospital. When a person was transported to hospital so often it happened when a Registered Nurse was not available. Care staff employees have limited ability to provide care in emergency situations. Falls, complex pain, chest pain, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing, wound care, diabetic care, aggressive behaviour and suicide ideation are some of the reasons I have observed people are transported to hospital. If a registered Nurse is assigned to the care 24 hours/day many admissions could be eliminated. Our organisation has a verbal policy for care staff employees, “when in doubt call 000 and transfer to hospital, then call the doctor”. Although there may be Registered Nurses in other parts of the village they are so few in number and so busy with people in their care they frequently encourage the care staff employee to have the person transferred out.

Aged Care Registered Nurse Ratios

Until recently I was responsible for clinical governance of 150 people in two different units, one unit with 60 people is Dementia Specific. While being responsible for ensuring the care needs of these people were met I was also responsible for completing all documentation required for ACFI submission. Care staff provided personal care needs and administration of medications from Webster packs, I provided all expert and technical care requirements, conducted all required assessments and developed care plans for each person. Although I was employed for 7.5 hours/day, in an effort to complete the work I worked an average of 2 – 2.5 hours unpaid overtime every day. The need for Registered Nurse to person ratios in aged care and particularly dementia care is paramount to providing good care to these people and maintaining the financial viability of the organization.

Registered Nurse Education

Financial support must be provided to encourage Registered Nurses to undertake post-graduate studies in Gerontology and Dementia Care. Caring for elderly people is complex and requires the Registered Nurse to have specific knowledge and exceptional physical assessment skills. In many instances the person is unable to describe their need. The Registered Nurse with post-graduate skills has the understanding and knowledge to conduct complex physical assessments and can often identify and meet the need of the person even though they cannot verbalize it.

As the Australian population ages, please take time to consider who will provide the care you need.

Thank you for the opportunity to put my thoughts forward
Bevlyn Grant, RN MS