

Submission
No 12

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 9/07/2015

Partially Confidential

I am extremely concerned and somewhat dumbfounded that there is any consideration necessary of whether there is a need for registered nurses in aged care facilities. Registered nurses 24/7 are an imperative in all nursing homes, especially those with high care need residents. Further, that there is no minimum ratio of carers/assistants to residents is just as important an issue. My mother is in a nursing home. She has dementia. She has multiple medical issues and is on multiple medications. She has a button around her neck to press if she needs help. Unfortunately she does not remember that the button exists or what it is for so she does not use it. She is totally at the mercy of the level of staff supervision available. On the two occasions that I have had to push the button for her it has taken up to 20 minutes for someone to arrive. She is on medication for constipation which was not evident when she moved in. I also phone her every morning. There are mornings when she sits in excrement until someone turns up just before breakfast to help her. Again, I have waited on the phone for 20 minutes before someone has arrived after I instruct her to press the button. She is constantly frightened of being alone and on her own. I visit her every single evening for more than an hour. The carers are generally very good but there is simply not enough of them. The management insist that they are not understaffed. Last night I visited at 6pm. An elderly gentleman resident asked me to help his wife (also a resident in a wheelchair) to push her to her room after dinner because she regularly waits long periods of time until a carer is available to help her. This couple do not have dementia, those who do are helpless to advocate for themselves and are left in situ until carers are finished with the overloaded work routine they already have.

Of course, management have gone home at 5pm so it is the registered nurses that provide the guidance for the carers in both medical matters and care routines. I find it incomprehensible that there is consideration being given to remove the requirement for a registered nurse on duty at all times. There is not enough staff available on duty now. The direction of this inquiry should be to increase the number of staff available to residents, both RNs and carers, not to decrease it. It is common to find the facility seemingly deserted after dinner time and extremely difficult to find staff. We have minimum ratios in childcare but not for those who have contributed to our society and our families for a lifetime and who are medically and perhaps cognitively in a more vulnerable state than our infants. This is a disgraceful situation.