

**Submission  
No 42**

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

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Aged Care is a caring discipline that draws on many skills that a registered trained nurse has developed during their education and practice. Aged care combines diplomacy as well as skilful observation, interpreting and implementing action that involves other health professionals and families to provide quality care for ageing Australians. Not all residents in aged care are old - it is necessary for flexibility and compassion as well as competent care to manage the often complex medical and physical needs of any aged care resident/client. These skills and competencies do not just appear with aged care workers. The skills cannot be taught in a brief training period that awards a certificate - an apprenticeship is necessary. Many aged care workers are not comfortable working with older people especially those with dementia and mental health issues because of the lack of adequate training and supervision. Competence and compassion have a dollar value that is often undervalued in a profitable aged care service. A registered nurse has studied anatomy, physiology and pharmacology, the integration of the body's functions and practical skills such as wound care as well as ethics and legal responsibility in socio-medical contexts. Registered Nurses are registered with a governing board that is Australia wide they are monitored and reviewed annually. To practice they must spend time on professional development, they must be competent or their registration can be cancelled. Therefore Registered Nurses are better placed in Aged Care environments because they are skilled professionals who are accountable for their critical thinking and practice. Aged Care is not a second rate 'end of the line' service - it demands the same standards of care and expertise that people who live in Australia receive in any medical/hospital situation.