

Submission
No 5

**INQUIRY INTO PROVISIONS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH
AMENDMENT (REGISTERED NURSES IN NURSING
HOMES) BILL 2020**

Organisation: Nurses Christian Fellowship Australia

Date Received: 12 January 2021



NURSES CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP AUSTRALIA

**The Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street, SYDNEY NSW 2000**

I write to you on behalf of the Nurses Christian Fellowship Australia Board in reference to the proposed *Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes Bill 2020*. We are very concerned about the possible passing of any Bill that may reduce the presence of Registered Nurses (RNs) in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACFs). Such a reduction in practice and educational standards will have a substantial negative impact on the health care and quality of life outcomes for our elderly residents/consumers and people with chronic disability.

RNs hold a vital role in the unique clinical skill set they have and should be onsite at every aged care facility 24/7 in order to facilitate best practice for our residents/consumers throughout their stay. RNs directly influence, hold key management roles and are typically the clinical leaders involved in co-ordination, delivery and monitoring of evidence based practice and continuous quality improvement in the health care field (Dwyer et al, 2011). Australia's population is ageing and the demographic is shifting. The Australian health care system is dealing with older people with complex and constantly changing physical, mental, social and spiritual health care needs.

People living in RACFs more commonly have co-morbidities, chronic disease and multiple pharmacotherapy and 75% of people in RACFs are known to be 85 or older (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016, Grealish et al. 2012, General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 2016). Furthermore, 50% of people in RACFs experience some form of dementia, 87% require high-level care and approximately 80% are known to have a mental health condition (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016). The result is an increasing demand for services that can support a growing pattern of frailty, dependence and complexity amongst populations receiving care in RACFs (KordaMentha 2014, KPMG 2013, Grealish et al. 2013).

Australian men over age 85 now have the highest suicide rate in our nation and more than double of our teenagers (The Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015)

RNs facilitate the delivery of high quality nursing care, blending skills in chronic and acute illness, with an individualised, person-centred approach to the nursing care of all residents/consumers. RNs are responsible for a range of key direct care activities including providing, managing and overseeing the implementation of the Australian Government Aged Care Quality Standards (2019) and assessments for the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI), which include:

- * Nursing care procedures providing evidence based best practice, codes of practice and standards of care
- * Safe behavioural management in dementia care including high level psychogeriatric leadership involvement
- * Health emergency responses, including identification of acute deterioration in residents related to falls and infections compounded by co-morbidities
- * Palliative care including complex pain management
- * Medication administration and management consistent with quality use of medicines guidelines
- * Infection prevention and control programs.
- * Capacity to respond to critical incidents and prevent unnecessary hospital admission and unnecessary ambulance call out and consequent effect of these upon the provision of ambulance services to the wider community.
- * Whole person centred care including emotional, spiritual and psychological attention and understanding.
- * Co coordinating multi-disciplinary holistic health care teams
- * Encouraging career pathway opportunities in this growing nursing field
- * Ongoing education for assistants in nursing, residents/consumers and families
- * Quality improvement projects

The RNs role is often one of advocacy for the vulnerable in society and so with this in mind and based on national and international research and evidence Nurses Christian Fellowship Australia ask you to consider the need to have at least one Registered Nurse on every shift at Residential Aged Care Facilities in NSW. We appreciate your careful consideration in this matter and thank you.

Yours sincerely,
Gabrielle Macaulay
 NCFA – President
 RN, RM. B App Sc./Nursing, Grad Dip Mid, M Ministry.

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