

Submission
No 9

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

Organisation: Country Women's Association of NSW

Date Received: 29 January 2021



Country Women's Association of NSW

*Incorporated in 1931 by an Act of NSW Parliament
Constituent Society of the Associated Country Women of the World*

ABN 82 318 909 926

29 January 2021

Dear Committee Members,

Re: Inquiry into the provisions of the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on behalf of the Country Women's Association of NSW ("CWA of NSW") to the inquiry into the provisions of the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2020.

The CWA of NSW is the state's largest rural-based advocacy group. The provision of better standards of health-care, particularly aged-care, for all residents across the state is a central pillar of the advocacy work undertaken by the organisation presently and since its inception 100 years ago.

By virtue of the location of its members, the CWA of NSW is also highly concerned about the provision of healthcare in rural, regional and remote areas, which have been in terminal decline for decades. We have recently provided a comprehensive submission (incorporating the results of a survey undertaken by over 800 rural residents) to the parliamentary inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote NSW.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the need for registered nurses ("RN's") to be present in aged-care facilities across the state '24/7' as this is something that we have lobbied for since at least 2015, and possibly earlier.

Our position is simple. We strongly believe that it is essential that there be a requirement for a RN to be on duty at all times in all aged care facilities, but particularly those considered high-care in nature. We further believe that this requirement should be included in any NSW legislation to ensure quality of care to older members of our community in nursing homes.

There are many reasons put forward to support the need for a RN to be on duty 24/7. However the main arguments are to ensure a qualified professional is on duty who is able to:

- prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and costly overburdening of the already stretched ambulance and hospital systems
- perform expert nursing procedures
- oversee the administering of medications and any potential side effects
- manage changing or deteriorating conditions
- decide if and when to call in other services.

We are aware of counter-arguments made by those in government that a legislated requirement such as this would place an unnecessary burden on rural, regional and remote aged-care providers. This is clearly a nonsense position; based on an entrenched belief that country people should accept second-class health care.

All aged-care residents, regardless of their postcode, deserve a basic level of care which can be provided by RN's. If there are issues with recruiting and retaining RNs in rural areas then

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we suggest there is a broader systemic problem in relation to funding, wages and working conditions for those nurses that might consider careers in these areas.

We trust that following consultation with the sector and feedback from the community, the committee will agree that to ensure the best possible care is provided to the aged residing in nursing homes an RN should be on duty at all times.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comments. We would be very pleased and willing to assist the committee further in any future deliberations, including appearing at any scheduled public hearings.

Kind Regards,

Danica Leys
Chief Executive Officer