TIME FOR ACTION

Aged care is one of Australia’s most rapidly expanding sectors, but governments seem unable to keep up.

The number in residential aged care has nearly doubled since 1995 – yet consecutive governments have failed to legislate the minimum number of staff with necessary skills.

A new report commissioned by the ANMF (with independent researchers) has delivered strong evidence for aged care reform. The report’s findings reflect feedback from ANMF members working on the ground.

Our members need change to provide decent care to residents, many with dementia and other high-complex needs.

We have provided the case for reform – now we are determined to see action.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The ANMF submitted the National Aged Care Staffing and Skills Mix Project report to a Senate inquiry into the aged care workforce. The inquiry is due to announce recommendations in April.

The report delivers a compelling case for legislation to establish minimum staffing levels and a skills mix in residential care.

We hope the Senate inquiry acts on the report, but we will never sit back and depend on politicians to act.

The ANMF and our state and territory branches are working to plan a national campaign to achieve these vital reforms.

Do you have a story about your experience with aged care?
Let us know at agedcare@anmftas.org.au

Working in aged care but not an ANMF member? Register online at:
www.anmftas.org.au/join_home

Like us on facebook to keep up-to-date with what is happening:
facebook.com/ANMFtasbranch

Read the full report at:

THE EVIDENCE IS IN.

Aged care needs:
• guaranteed staff ratios to ensure safe staffing
• mandated nursing and care hours for each resident.
UNDERSTAFFED AND UNDER-SKILLED

The aged care sector has two urgent priorities: more nursing and care hours, and a skills mix with a guaranteed ratio of registered nurses, enrolled nurses and carers.

These are the key findings of the National Aged Care Staffing and Skills Mix Project – backed by the ANMF in partnership with the ANMF (SA Branch), Flinders University and the University of South Australia.

The study found gaping holes across the system and frequent episodes of missed care in aged care facilities.

Researchers took evidence from nurses, carers and aged care residents in the first Australian study of its kind.

The evidence confirmed what many in the sector have long suspected – aged care is severely understaffed and under-skilled.

“Aged care is severely understaffed and under-skilled.”

MORE NURSING AND CARE HOURS NEEDED

Current staffing levels in Australian aged care are dangerously inadequate, according to the National Aged Care Staffing and Skills Mix Project report.

The study found residents need 4.3 hours of care per day, but typically receive only 2.84 hours.

The shortfall means that aged care residents miss out on essential care and treatment.

A survey of more than 3,000 RNs, ENs and carers found that nursing services and personal care interventions were often missed.

Only 8.2 per cent of respondents indicated that staffing was always adequate. Three in four employees felt unable to request additional staff.

THE RIGHT MIX OF SKILLS

Nurses told researchers that a staff skills mix in aged care should be introduced to mandate the number of registered nurses, enrolled nurses and carers – much like childcare and schools.

Aged care facilities now admit a greater number of residents with more complex needs and shorter stays than previously.

The National Aged Care Staffing and Skills Mix Project report recommends a skills mix of 30 per cent registered nurses, 20 per cent enrolled nurses and 50 per cent assistants in nursing.

An average four hours and eighteen minutes of care per day, with a skills-mix requirement of:

- 30% RN
- 20% EN
- 50% CARER