



## Residential and community aged care services: staffing and standards

### It is the policy of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation that:

1. The optimum mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents and clients of aged care services is achieved by the care team working together with the residents and clients and their representatives.
2. Nursing care is an integral component of aged care and is provided by the nursing team, comprised of registered nurses, enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing.
3. In order to ensure that all residents and/or clients are provided with safe, quality care, they must receive initial and ongoing assessment, planning and management of care by a registered nurse.
4. Residents and/or clients of aged care services have a right to receive care provided by appropriately skilled, competent and qualified staff which is matched to their care needs.
5. The employment of a permanent nursing workforce is strongly advocated to provide a resident care environment and a nursing practice environment which promotes safe care, continuity of care and the development of quality relationships between carers, residents and clients. The employment of casual staff is supported only for the short term when staffing levels or the skill mix of the staff is such that resident or client care may be compromised.
6. Fully funded and regulated benchmarks should be established to enable the provision of sufficient staffing and skills mix to meet the assessed care needs of all residents, covering all staff classifications linked to residents' and clients' needs, quality outcomes and reasonable workloads.
7. The provision of nursing care in the aged care sector requires a minimum number of registered nurses, enrolled nurses, and where applicable, assistants in nursing, at an appropriate skill mix. That minimum standard reflects the care needs and acuity of residents and clients and is calculated using sector-wide, union supported mechanism.
8. The minimum staffing requirement in all aged care facilities where there are residents assessed and funded at high care level should be 24 hour onsite registered nurse coverage.
9. A full time director of nursing (or equivalent classification) must be employed in each aged care facility employing nurses. This person has a management role and must be available for consultation by nursing staff on clinical and other nursing issues with cover provided out of hours.
10. Registered nurses should be encouraged and supported to take a leadership role and be care-coordinator across their span of duty. There should be systems in place for the enablement of evidence-based practice and for all staff to contribute to the body of nursing knowledge through research.
11. Staffing and skills mix structures in aged care services should provide career pathways that reflect the acquisition of skills and development of competence of the nursing team.



12. Erosion of aged care nursing positions and/or services in any setting, by the employment of other staff categories (however titled) to manage care or provide nursing care, is opposed.
13. Aged care nursing should be recognised as specialised practice with opportunities for education provided and supported by employers. The time and other resources required for orientation of all staff and for education and staff development specific to aged care should be fully funded and additional to the time and resources required to carry out nursing functions.

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**Note:** this policy should be read in conjunction with the following ANMF policies/position statements/guidelines which can be found at: <http://www.anmf.org.au/pages/anmf-policies>

ANMF Policy on:

- *Role boundaries in the provision of personal care* (February 2015)

ANMF Position Statements on:

- *Administration of medicines* (November 2015)
- *Assistants in nursing providing aspects of nursing care* (May 2015)
- *Registration of assistants in nursing* (February 2015)

ANMF Guidelines on:

- *Delegation by registered nurses* (May 2015)
- *The use of dose administration aids by nurses* (November 2015)