

# Australian Nursing Federation Supplementary submission

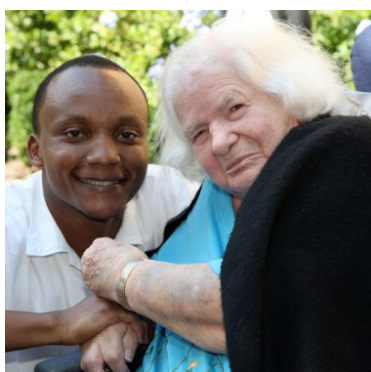
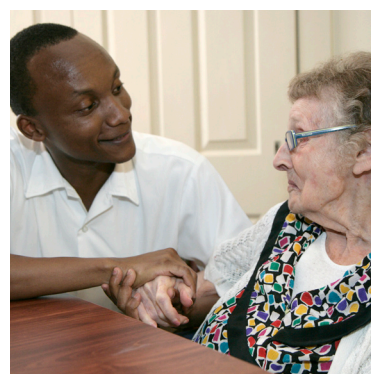
## Productivity Commission Inquiry Caring for Older Australians



because  
we care

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Quality care for older Australians



## Introduction

*Because We Care.* Three simple words that sum up the dedication of aged care nurses and care staff across Australia.

The aged care system in Australia must strive to ensure we have world class nursing homes, providing the best care for our elderly residents when needed.

In early 2009 the Australian Nursing Federation, incorporating the state and territory Branches (including the NSW Nurses Association and the Queensland Nurses Union) decided that something must be done about aged care in Australia. Together we launched the *Because We Care* Campaign, working with community, residents, providers, relatives and the 193,000 ANF members to send a strong message to our parliamentarians that aged care matters.

The aim is simple - to ensure aged care nurses and care staff have the resources necessary to deliver the best possible care and that vulnerable older Australians have access to quality care, whenever and wherever they need it.

It is also important that the residents who rely on all of us to ensure they are well cared for and their tax dollars are spent wisely. Their families trust us to make sure their loved ones are cared for when they have to make the most difficult of all decisions - to move their parent, brother or sister, aunt or uncle, friend or partner into a nursing home.

The Productivity Commission Caring for Older Australians Public Inquiry is crucial to the future of aged care in Australia. The aged care system's needs are big and complex. It is the challenge for our generation to face up to our responsibilities because we are a caring, compassionate and egalitarian society. We must ensure that older Australians are treated with the dignity, respect and care they have earned.

I encourage you to read this supplementary submission and make the big changes necessary for all of us who rely on aged care.

*Because We Care*



**Lee Thomas**

Federal Secretary

Australian Nursing Federation



The *Because We Care* (BWC) Campaign was launched in March 2009 in Parliament House by the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) and its state and territory Branches (including the New South Wales Nurses Association and the Queensland Nurses Union).

*Because We Care* is the first major national campaign run by the Australian Nursing Federation. The BWC campaign strategy has been to involve members, residents, the community and key stakeholders in aged care to support the campaign, and let the federal government know that substantial funding and operational changes to aged care are imperative if we are going to provide quality care for older Australians.

Our aim is simple - to ensure aged care nurses and care staff have the resources necessary to deliver the best possible care and that vulnerable older Australians have access to quality care, whenever and wherever they need it.

The campaign has four main objectives:

1. the right balance of skills and nursing hours so that nursing and care staff can provide quality care for every resident;
2. fair pay for aged care nurses and care staff who are currently paid up to \$300 per week less than nurses in the other sectors;
3. recognition of the professional skill of assistants in nursing and care staff through a national licensing system; and
4. a guarantee that taxpayer funding is used for nursing care for each resident.

### **BWC Research**

Prior to the launch of the campaign, the ANF undertook significant and comprehensive research across the country with members, non-members and baby boomers to discuss their perception of the aged care industry and changes which might be appropriate and supported. The ANF engaged Auspoll to undertake focus groups with aged care nurses (EN's, RN's and AIN's) and with the wider community. The nurses we spoke to were representative of the aged care workforce and comprised of:

- 70% RNs & 30% ENs and AINs
- 60% nurses in high care settings and 40% nurses in low care settings
- 60% nurses working for not for profit facilities and 40% working in the private sector
- 80% nurses working for top 20 providers and 20% working in smaller facilities

Focus groups were also conducted with the general public (baby boomers) who had parents currently in nursing homes and those who had parents who "are likely to need nursing care in the near future" (80% women and 20% men).

The outcome of this research was used to shape the objectives of the campaign, which highlighted to the ANF that significant change to aged care was supported by the Australian community and workers in aged care.

What aged care RNs, ENs, AINs and the community told us:

### Aged care workers feel unrecognised

*"We don't get the appreciation for what we do." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*

*"Aside from the money part, I would like more time for care with the residents." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*

*"A lot of them [residents] would feel that they're not getting what they were five years ago." (Unionised Nurse, Sydney)*

*"Unfortunately you can't spend enough time with the residents now as what we used to." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*

*"The ratio of the nurses is really bad." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*

*"The resident's get good care but it's always hurried." (Unionised Nurse, Brisbane)*

*"When I worked in the private sector and went into the public sector I noticed a difference." (Unionised Nurse, Brisbane)*

*"I think the recognition would be the best thing for the staff." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*

### Staff ratios and wages are key issues

*"The aged care section under the federal government is underpaid for the staff, and it's overregulated with the residents and in the end the residents lose, instead of us working eight hours we end up working ten and twelve and we don't attract people from the public system because why come and work in aged care for less money?" (Non-Unionised Nurse, Sydney)*

*"Aside from the money part, I would like more time for care with the residents." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*

*"There's not enough RNs to residents ratio." (Unionised Nurse, Sydney)*

*"The ratio of the nurses is really bad." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*

*"Better pay, better ratios for nurses, ratios for nurses to patients, better pays and better conditions." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*

### Perception of aged care across the board

Our research showed that:

- many RNs, ENs and AINs and, feel that the work they do is not properly recognised or sufficiently valued by Australian society;
- the sense that their work is not sufficiently recognised or valued is linked to perceptions that: **staffing levels are inadequate, pay rates are low, the sector is under-funded** and the often **negative portrayal** of the aged care sector in the media; and
- aged care nurses thought the public, politicians and nurses in other sectors do not understand or were not aware of the experience and skill necessary to deliver effective aged care.

### The Undervaluation of aged care nursing

Members told us that:

- *"It's pretty poor isn't it? I think as AINs we work very hard and the pay we're getting is really lousy." (Non-Unionised AIN, Sydney)*
- *"The AIN pay is appalling." (Unionised Nurse, Sydney)*
- *"I think you're generally regarded as lower." (Non-Unionised AIN, Sydney)*
- *We don't get the appreciation for what we do." (Non-Unionised AIN, Brisbane)*
- *"There is a stigma to being an aged care nurse." (Non-Unionised Nurse, Sydney)*

### Understaffing is hurting the aged care industry

Our research told us that:

There is broad agreement that staffing levels are impacting on capacity of the sector to deliver care. It has been seen as a capacity issue, rather than being about professionalism or quality of the work they do. This squeeze on their time affects both the basic physical care and emotional support that they are able to give their residents.

**This means that not only must many nurses make decisions about which residents' dignity will be put on hold while they wait to be changed, they are also increasingly unable to "get to know the residents", "have a chat when they really need it", "give them flexibility in the things you do for them".**

### Baby Boomers were supportive of change

Our research told us that:

Baby boomers supported a campaign for positive change in aged care and would like to see some action undertaken including the government improve resourcing in the sector. Many baby boomers have a positive image of aged care nurses who are seen, in general, as being caring, dedicated and hardworking.

### Staff ratios have universal support

Many baby boomers are aware the nurses **"are run off their feet"** and are understaffed but most were not really sure of just how bad the situation actually was when they were told. A few, who have direct experience with nursing homes, realised that **"the nurse is never around"** and you are more likely to get referred by the nurses aid.

**Interviews also informed the ANF that baby boomers expect fixed ratios of staff to residents, and nurses to AINS, to be standard regulation and already in place.**

### Pay Equity

Many baby boomers are aware the pay for aged care nurses and AINs is relatively low. Baby boomers we spoke to told us they think a nurse in aged care should be paid what a nurse in a hospital is paid. They also recognise that better pay could help with the quality of service to aged care. Some baby boomers would not want to be looked after by staff on \$15 per hour or a comparable rate.

***"I think the elderly people would want to know the aged care workers are being paid well to look after them."*** (Baby boomer, parent in care)

### The funding mechanism is not working well

Our interviews with members informed us that:

The current funding mechanism is seen as a big issue and is not viewed as functional by those working in the sector. Members told us the decentralised control results in variable resource allocation and staffing between different institutions. The ad-hoc and variable nature of staffing levels and care in the sector is linked to this mechanism.

Members talked about the time consuming nature of ACFI reporting requirements which means the current funding system reduces staff capacity for caring because of the amount of time and paperwork required for assessments.



### Our grassroots campaign activities

*Because We Care* has undertaken hundreds of community and workplace activities throughout Australia to get the community involved and supporting the objectives of the campaign. Community and workplace participation has been a key objective of the campaign as we have worked to garner support to show the federal politicians that substantial change in aged care is urgent and supported by the community and by the workforce.

### Launch of the Campaign

The ANF launched the *Because We Care* campaign in March 2009 at Parliament House in Canberra. Over 28 federal MP's and Senators were present, including the then Minister for Ageing Justine Elliott. The launch was hosted by Senator Claire Moore, Senator for Queensland, and involved aged care worker Alba Vignolo talking about what it is like to work in the aged care industry.

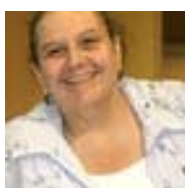


### Campaign DVD

The campaign DVD was produced at a nursing home in Sydney, and follows the experiences of four aged care nurses currently working in the industry. It was shown at the launch in Canberra and used in worksites to provide information about the campaign and the concerns of aged care 'faces of the campaign' who appeared in the DVD.



### Faces of the campaign who feature on the campaign DVD:



Alba Vignolo

AIN Brisbane

#### **More than a job**

*"It's more than a job. The people we care for deserve the best and they are extremely appreciative of what you do. We need to get it right."*

Lucille McKenna

RN Sydney

**Need is increasing**

*"The need for aged care is going to increase. That's why it's so important to keep nurses working in aged care. If they leave we won't get them back."*



Lydia Vella

RN Sydney

**They're part of you**

*"Old people, they're wonderful. They're beautiful and if you start working in a nursing home you'll feel that they are part of you. Deep in my heart I love them."*

Frank Mosombi

AIN and undergraduate RN

**Pay issue needs solving**

*"More needs to be done about the pay issue. The job is physically, psychologically and emotionally draining. But it's very fulfilling and I like it."*



Thousands of email messages were sent to Aged Care Minister Justine Elliott'



**SHOW YOU CARE**  
Click and email  
the Federal Minister  
for Ageing

**Email the Minister**

Dear Minister Elliot,

I am writing to you as a message of support for the Australian Nursing Federation's national campaign called 'because we care' – quality care for older Australians.

Because I care, I call on you and the Government to act and properly fund aged care by introducing:  
The right balance of skills and nursing hours so that nursing and care staff can provide quality care for every resident.

Fair pay for aged care nurses and care staff who are paid up to \$300 per week less than nurses in other sectors.

Recognition of the professional skills of Assistants in Nursing and care staff through a national licensing system.

A guarantee that taxpayer funding is used for nursing and personal care for each resident.

As the Australian population is ageing and more and more people will need nursing home care, now is our chance to make sure that aged care nurses and care staff have the resources necessary to deliver the best care possible.

Now is the time to make a difference for aged care.

Signed:

Dated:

## Charter for Quality Care

Over 16,000 signed charters were handed over to former Minister for Ageing Justine Elliott at a nursing home in her electorate of Richmond.



## Sign the Charter.

Because I Care, I call on the Federal Government to properly fund aged care and I support the Australian Nursing Federation's campaign to achieve:

1. The right balance of skills and nursing hours so that nursing and care staff can provide quality care for every resident
2. Fair pay for aged care nurses and care staff who are paid up to \$300 per week less than nurses in other sectors
3. Recognition of the professional skills of Assistants in Nursing and care staff through a national licensing system
4. A guarantee that taxpayer funding is used for nursing and personal care for each resident.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

I'M: ☐ A RESIDENT ☐ A RELATIVE ☐ A COMMUNITY MEMBER  
☐ A NURSE ☐ CARE STAFF

FACILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ HOME POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_



AUTHORISED BY GED KEARNEY AUSTRALIAN NURSING FEDERATION 765 OLIVEN STREET MELBOURNE 3000



On Friday, 16 October, we handed over 16,000 charters to the former Minister for Ageing, Justine Elliot in her electorate of Richmond. This part of the campaign has been a huge success with thousands of members and our supporters in the community signing on to support the aims of the *Because We Care* campaign.

## Message to my MP: Time to Deliver for Aged Care in Budget 2010

A postcard campaign launched at the ALP National Conference by nurses with 'Message to My MP: Time to deliver for aged care in budget 2010'. Conference delegates were offered blood pressure tests as they entered the conference 'to keep the pressure on MPs'. Thousands of the postcards have been sent to MPs, Senators and Ministers throughout Australia.





Message to my MP:

Older Australians built our nation. They need and deserve quality aged care. In Budget 2010, I strongly support mandatory staffing levels and targeted funding for wages in aged care. As my local MP, I ask you to stand up for older Australians.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE: \_\_\_\_\_

MY COMMENT TO MY MP: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE AFFIX STAMP

AUTHORISED BY: OLD AGE/RENTY AUSTRALIAN NURSING FEDERATION, 380 QUEEN STREET, MELBOURNE 3000

 **because we care**  
Quality care for older Australians

[www.becausewecare.org.au](http://www.becausewecare.org.au)

Now Minister for Ageing Mark Butler has his blood pressure tested by *Because We Care* nurses at the ALP National conference.



Postcard activities were held at workplaces and local electorate offices in some states and territories. The ANF produced over 280,000 postcards and thousands were sent to MP's and Senators offices in each state and territory.





Members of the general community enthusiastically support the ANF's *Because We Care* campaign by signing a Message to My MP Postcard and holding actions outside of MP's offices to lobby on the campaign objectives. Hundreds of these activities took place throughout Australia, including the offices of Prime Minister Julia Gillard, then Minister for Finance Lindsay Tanner, Treasurer Wayne Swan, and Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon.

At the ALP National Conference, a new national Aged Care Platform was endorsed and reintegrated with the Heath platform. The new platform, which can be found on the *Because We Care* web page, ([www.becausewecare.org.au](http://www.becausewecare.org.au)) commits the ALP to supporting the introduction of minimum staffing levels, transparency and accountability of funding to providers and more funding to close the wages gap.



ANF former Federal Secretary Ged Kearney hands a Message to my MP: Time to Deliver for aged care in budget 2010 to then Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard as she enters the ALP National Conference.

### ANF Federal Secretary Addresses the National Press Club

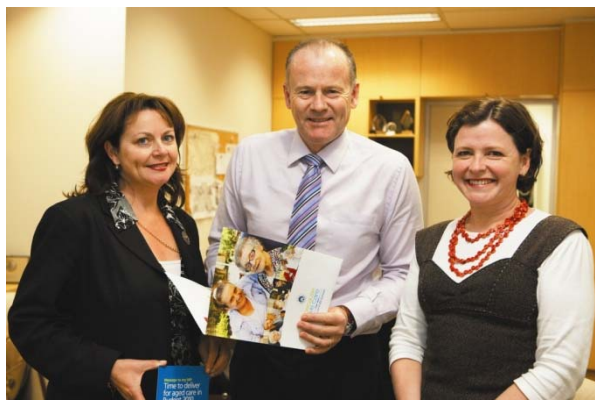
An address by Federal Secretary Ged Kearney at the National Press Club on September 16, 2009 about aged care. She described a day in the life of an aged care worker, and the need for more funding given that demand will increase by 56% in 2020. Ged strongly illustrated the case for our key claim - the need for minimum staffing standards in aged care.

The full text of this speech is on [www.anf.org.au](http://www.anf.org.au).



## Lobbying

The ANF and our members have met with MP and Senators around Australia to discuss the campaign and the urgent changes needed to aged care. Below are photos of members and officials meeting with former Minister for Finance Lindsay Tanner, and Shayne Neuman MP.



Australian Nursing Federation former Federal Secretary Ged Kearney, along with current ANF Assistant Federal Secretary Yvonne Chaperon met with former Finance Minister Lindsay Tanner to discuss *Because We Care*.

In Victoria, postcards were handed out in shopping centres, posted, dropped in letter boxes in key and marginal seats, while others have been delivered to various locations including aged care facilities. Former Finance Minister Tanner was interested in the issues raised by the ANF around skills mix and nursing hours, fair pay and the responsible use of taxpayer funding for aged care.

The ANF was given an opportunity to outline to the Minister the differences in qualifications and pay rates of nurses and care staff employed in private residential aged care both in Victoria and nationally. The Minister said that aged care was a government priority both now and into the future.

## Because We Care campaign page

A screenshot of the 'because we care' website. The top section features the campaign logo and a grid of photos of people. Below this is a section titled 'BWC welcomes Labor Government and urges them to deliver on aged care reform agenda'. It includes text about Labor's return to government and a call to action to 'Sign the petition' and 'Tell us your story'. The bottom right corner features a photo of Yvonne Chaperon and a quote from her.

## [www.becausewecare.org.au](http://www.becausewecare.org.au)

As part of the campaign, the ANF has established a web campaign page. Thousands of aged care workers, residents and community members have visited the campaign page and undertaken on-line activities to support *Because We Care*. Thousands have signed up for regular email messages from BWC to update them on campaign activities, and regular news and media releases are posted.

The BWC web page is also used to post media releases, stories that have been published in newspapers, the campaign DVD and all other campaign material, interviews with Channel 7's Sunrise, ABC news, ABC 7.30 report, WIN TV interview, 9am with David and Kim, interviews with members, media releases and news articles and many more other stories and activities.



## What you can do to help the campaign

Members and supporters have been encouraged to undertake activities to help the campaign including:

- ✓ Hold a meeting in your workplace to discuss the campaign.
- ✓ Join the BWC face book page.
- ✓ Call the talkback radio stations in support.
- ✓ Write to Health Minister Nicola Roxon
- ✓ Have a morning or afternoon tea with residents/families.
- ✓ Sign and send a Message to My MP Postcard.
- ✓ Hold a stall at your local shops.
- ✓ Write a letter to the local newspaper.
- ✓ Letterbox your local streets.
- ✓ Sign up for regular information at the BWC webpage.
- ✓ Write a letter to your local MP or Senator and arrange to meet.
- ✓ Contact your branch of the ANF.
- ✓ Go to the web to look at DVD's.
- ✓ Ask your workmates to sign the postcards.

## Regional Australia activities have included:



QNU members promoting the national postcard campaign at a market stall in Emerald.

Queensland Nurses' Union members and activists promote the BWC campaign in Cairns during November.



The ANF Victorian Branch promoting Because We Care and the postcard campaign in Yarraville.

The BWC van visits sites in Dubbo and Orange to talk to aged care nurses and residents about the campaign.





New South Wales Nurses Association members and activists promote the BWC campaign at a stall in Bathurst on 11 November 2009.

For photos of more activities, regional visits and stories, go to [www.becausewecare.org.au](http://www.becausewecare.org.au)

### On line Petition and 'Tell us your story'

Supporters are always undertaking extra activities in support of the campaign. Currently they are being asked to go to [www.becausewecare.org.au](http://www.becausewecare.org.au) and sign our petition to support minimum staffing levels and wages or send a letter via our campaign web page. There are thousands of signatures on this petition. (Petition will be sent to the Productivity Commission in December).



### Because We Care – It's time to fix aged care

Published by [ANF](#) on Jun 20, 2010

**Category:** Health

**Region:** Australia

**Target:** Productivity Commission

**Web site:** <http://www.becausewecare.org.au>

#### Background (Preamble):

Please sign the ANF's Because We Care petition calling on the Productivity Commission to recognise the crisis in staffing levels/skills mix and wages in aged care and to make recommendations to fix these issues in their report to the Federal Government.

#### Petition:

Because I care, I urge the Productivity Commission to recognise the crisis in staffing levels/skills mix and wages in aged care and recommend to the Federal Government that now is the time to fix aged care.

[Sign the petition](#)



## 'Tell us your story'

Supporters are being asked to go to [www.becausewecare.org.au](http://www.becausewecare.org.au) and tell us their story. We have compiled hundreds of stories for the Productivity Commission from nurses and carers in aged care about what works and what does not work in their nursing home, the actual staffing levels in their nursing home and the problems they are finding. These stories will be told at public hearings by members who work in aged care.

## Because We Care face book page



**facebook** Remember Me Forgot your password?

Email Password

**Sign Up** 'Because We Care' Aged Care Campaign is on Facebook  
Sign up for Facebook to connect with 'Because We Care' Aged Care Campaign.

**'Because We Care' Aged Care Campaign**

Wall Info Discussions

**because we care**  
Quality care for older Australians

**Information**

Category:  
Common Interest - Beliefs & Causes

Description:  
Because We Care asks aged care nursing and care staff to support the four aims of the Charter for Quality Aged Care:

1. The right balance of skills and nursing hours so that nursing and care staff can provide quality care for every resident
2. Fair pay for aged care nurses and care staff who are paid up to \$300 per week less than nurses in other sectors
3. Recognition of the professional skills of Assistants in Nursing and care staff through a national licensing system
4. A guarantee that taxpayer funding is used for nursing and personal care for each resident.

**Shelley Markham** Hi Guys, it has been a pleasure working with you over the past year as part of the ANF (Victorian Branch). I finish there on Friday and just wanted to wish you luck with the campaign.  
October 9 at 9:16pm · Report

**RECENT ACTIVITY**

**Gerardine Kearney** discussed ARTICLE IN AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER on the 'Because We Care' Aged Care Campaign discussion board.

**Linda Hardman** discussed ARTICLE IN AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER on the 'Because We Care' Aged Care Campaign discussion board.

**Gerardine Kearney and Linda Hardman** discussed better pay for the AIN and RN on the 'Because We Care' Aged Care Campaign discussion board.

**Melissa Campbell**  
**Queensland Nurses Union - ePostcard**  
Source: [www.qnu.org.au](http://www.qnu.org.au)  
Get involved in the Because We Care campaign by completing an ePostcard. We're aiming to flood the offices of Members of Parliament with these postcards as a display of support for our campaign in the lead up to the 2010 federal budget.  
October 7 at 4:56pm

**Drew** get you training on line at a better rate and make it evidence based and best practice  
**Frontline Aged Care Solutions; your online training**  
Source: [www.faconline.com.au](http://www.faconline.com.au)  
eLearning provides innovative solutions for online learning and compliance management.  
October 7 at 7:19am

**RECENT ACTIVITY**

Supporters can also become a face book friend of the *Because We Care* campaign, and enables all friends to post stories, talk about their issues in aged care, share experiences with other aged care workers, or for family and friends to post comments and messages of support. There are currently over 3,750 face book friends. The BWC face book page can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=55373802286>.

## Budget Submission

The ANF budget submission for 2010-2011 focussed on aged care only – such is the urgent need for an injection of more funds and resources. The main points raised by the ANF in the budget submission are:

1. the right number and mix of staff to deliver quality aged care with a claim for the introduction and funding of minimum staffing levels;
2. fixing the wages gap;
3. providing formal training for workers who currently do not have any;
4. transparent and accountable funding;
5. a national licensing system of all staff in aged care; and
6. benchmarking the cost of care.

A full copy of the ANF 2010 – 2011 budget submission can be found at:  
[http://www.anf.org.au/pdf/submissions/2009/Sub\\_Budget\\_2010\\_11.pdf](http://www.anf.org.au/pdf/submissions/2009/Sub_Budget_2010_11.pdf).

### Further Polling conducted by Auspoll

In early September 2009, the ANF engaged Auspoll to conduct comprehensive polling across the country to show what Australians think about aged care and what needs to be done to fix it. The poll showed there is significant support in the community for the government to prioritise aged care and direct resources to this sector.

#### *Aged Care is Important – Auspoll results*

- Ninety two per cent of Australians indicated that aged care was an important issue to them.
- Seventy per cent believe that nurses are 'good' or 'excellent'.
- Nine out of ten Australians were concerned that the number of nurses in aged care is falling.
- Only 16 per cent rated the quality of aged care as 'good' or 'excellent' whilst 33 per cent believe that it is 'poor' ... with 51 per cent stating that it was 'fair'.
- Nine out of ten Australians - 93 per cent, stated that the Government should improve the pay and conditions for aged care staff.

### House Pay Equity Committee Report

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations tabled its report into pay equity and associated issues related to increasing women's participation in the workforce. The 'Making it Fair' Report released on 23 November 2009 highlights the continuing gap in wages between women and men and repeatedly points to the aged care sector as an example of ingrained and sustained discrimination.

The ANF made a submission to the Standing Committee and appeared at the hearings on behalf of aged care workers. The final report urges relevant ministers including former Minister for Finance, Lindsay Tanner, to act on the dire situation in aged care:

***"There was a great deal of evidence presented that went to the situation of women employed in the aged care sector.... it is clear that action needs to be taken to improve wages and conditions...I am aware of the dependence on the Australian government for the funding of this sector. I urge the responsible Ministers... to look at how we can responsibly increase the funding for wages in this sector."*** Sharryn Jackson MP and Committee Chair in the foreword.

### ANF Aged Care Nurses Delegation to Parliament House

Twenty aged care nurses and residents visited Federal Parliament on the 3 February 2010 to meet with MPs and Senators to push for increased funding to improve the aged care workforce.

A morning tea was held in the Senate Courtyard and over 30 MPs from across Australia attended. The impact of falling nursing and care staff numbers in aged care was discussed.



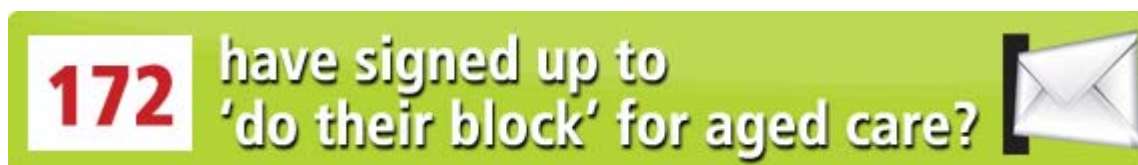
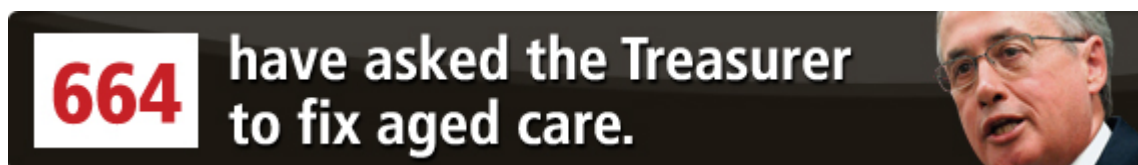
The ANF's proposal to address the \$300 wages gap between aged care nurses and nurses in public hospitals was outlined and the introduction of minimum staffing ratios in aged care facilities.

A media conference was held where the challenges outlined in the Intergenerational Report released by the Treasurer was raised, which highlighted that we must start now to invest in improving the quality of care for older Australians supported by aged care services.

At the media conference, former ANF Federal Secretary Ged Kearney stated that "The Federal Government's budget this year provides a real opportunity to stop the long term slide in the numbers of nursing staff working in aged care.

"If we don't act now we will see the level of nursing care provided to aged care residents fall significantly – with a 50% increase in the ratio of staff to residents in the next ten years.  
"This will reduce the amount of time nurses can spend with residents and ultimately lead to a fall in the standard of care for aged care residents.

### Further Budget Activities



Queensland members 'Do their Block' for aged care. The Queensland Nurses Union (QNU) asked members to do their block for aged care, signing up to receive community leaflets and then letterboxing their suburbs. Hundreds of QNU members signed up to help aged care, and distribute over 17,000 leaflets locally.

### Launch of TV and radio Campaign

On Wednesday 10 March 2010, we launched the Because We Care media campaign. It consisted of a national TV advert and, radio and print advertising.

Rita, whose mum is in a nursing home stars in the ads, telling us that 'every time she comes to visit her mum, the nurses are just so amazing, that they have 50-60 residents to look after and they always do it with a smile on their face.



But Rita said that she fears that nurses might say enough's enough and this would be a great loss as nurses deserve a whole lot better than they are getting now.

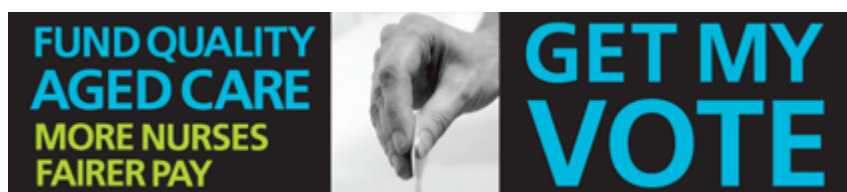
Speaking at the launch of the ads, Ged Kearney said "This is a plea from the heart. Older Australian's deserve the best possible care.

"If we don't inject more money into aged care in this budget I fear the nurses won't be there to care for them in the future.

NSWNA General Secretary Brett Holmes said the campaign would highlight the great work our nurses and caring staff do in aged care but it comes with the message - fix aged care or we will lose them.

The ads can be viewed at [www.becausewecare.org.au](http://www.becausewecare.org.au)

#### LAUNCH OF OUR 2010 ELECTION ACTIVITY



As part of our election strategy, we launched the Fund Quality Aged Care – more nurses, fairer pay – GET MY VOTE online activity. This was used as part of the *Because We Care* campaign to link delivering for the aged care members, to getting votes during the federal election expected in 2010. This logo was put on all emails, the web page, internal and external correspondence in the lead up to budget 2010.

In the lead up to the Federal Budget, the ANF ran an email campaign directed at key Ministers and MP's in each state via the *Because We Care* web page. Thousands of supporters across Australia clicked on the Fund Quality Aged Care – more nurses, fairer pay – GET MY VOTE logo above and an email message was sent to a key MP or Senator in most states. Those politicians who received the emails were:

- NSW - Minister Mark Arbib
- QLD - Treasurer Swan
- VIC - Finance Minister Tanner
- NT - Damian Hale MP
- ACT - Senator Kate Lundy
- SA - The Hon Mark Butler MP
- TAS - Sid Sidebottom MP

## Budget 2010 – A good start but more needs to be done

Treasurer Wayne Swan during his budget speech said that:

***“we believe nurses play a vital role in our hospitals and our communities and we have listened to their concerns. That is why I am announcing \$523 million to train and support our nurses, including in aged care and in our rural and regional communities. We believe in better planning of our aged care workforce. That is why we have asked the Productivity Commission to inquire into aged care, and why we’ll undertake more research into staffing levels, skills and resident care needs.”***

The ANF believes that we have commenced the process of fixing aged care in Australia and that this began with Budget 2010, but much more needs to be done. A leaflet was produced by the ANF after the budget win, and distributed at worksites throughout Australia, and in the Australian Nursing Journal.

## International Nurses Day – 12 May

International Nurses Day – May 12

Former PM Rudd, Treasurer Swan, Minister Roxon, Former Minister for Ageing Elliott and Mike Kelly MP attended an ANF IND event in a nursing home in the federal seat of Eden Monaro, the day after the budget, with ANF then Federal Secretary Ged Kearney, and incoming ANF Federal Secretary Lee Thomas.



### Aged care nurses have something to celebrate

Source: ABC News Published: Tuesday, May 11, 2010 11:01 AEST Expires: Monday, August 9, 2010 11:01 AEST Ged Kearney from the Australian Nursing Federation says aged-care nurses will be happy with the outcome of the federal budget.

***Because we care delivers \$130 million for aged care The Because we care campaign has achieved a major win, with the Rudd Government allocating \$130 million to initiatives that will improve the skill level of aged care nurses and recognise the professionalism of AiNs through a national licensing system.***



At the NSW Nurses Association on Wednesday 21 July 2010, Prime Minister Gillard had the following to say in regards to aged care, and in direct response to our *Because We Care* campaign:

***“If re-elected, further aged care reform will be a second term priority.***

***With an ageing population, we will need to substantially build Australia’s aged care capacity in the years ahead. That is why we have asked the Productivity Commission to conduct the most comprehensive inquiry into aged care in decades.***



*While that work is being undertaken, we will continue to meet our commitments to provide more aged care places, better access to health services, stronger consumer protections, and better training and support for aged care workers. I know many of you do this work because you love it, and not because of the wages you receive. But it is our responsibility to ensure there are professional, fulfilling and rewarding careers in aged care.*

*That is why this year's Budget has delivered financial help for around 50,000 personal care workers, assistants in nursing and nurses to help with the cost of upgrading their skills. That is part of a \$812 million investment in increasing the capacity of the aged care system.*

*The Productivity Commission has also been asked to examine how we can have a sufficient and skilled workforce into the future, so we can match the right number of staff with the right mix of skills to provide the care people should receive."*

At the same conference, Minister Roxon said as follows in relation to aged care, and answered substantial questions from aged care members in attendance:

*"That brings me to the next big area of change and progress for nurses – aged care.*

*As our population ages, we will of course need more aged care, and we will need more aged care workers including nurses. We believe that older Australians deserve better health and better aged care services. We are building a better, more sustainable system that older Australians can rely on, extending care beyond the hospital doors.*

*We are building the foundation of a modern system, taking full policy and funding responsibility for aged care and integrating it with Local Hospital Networks. We've already invested this year an \$812 million package of aged care reforms. This includes better planning and building the aged care workforce. We have provided additional funding to our aged care workforce programs to provide more training places and better support to help develop professional and fulfilling careers in aged care.*

***But we will go further.***

***If re-elected, aged care reform will be a priority for the Government's second term.*** *We have asked the Productivity Commission to conduct the most comprehensive inquiry into aged care in decades. We will respond quickly to the Commission's recommendations while continuing to meet our commitments to provide better training and support for aged care workers, more aged care places, better access to health services and stronger consumer protections.*

*Without aged care workers like nurses and carers we don't have an aged care system. Their skills, dedication and hard work are vital to providing high quality care but we recognise workloads can be demanding. The Productivity Commission has also been asked to develop options to ensure we have a sufficient and skilled workforce into the future.*

*An important part of the development of future workforce strategies is research that explores how we can better match the right number of staff with the right mix of skills to provide the care people should receive. This research, the recommendations of the independent Henry tax review and those of the Productivity Commission will be important inputs into future policy decisions.*

*We will take the same approach to aged care reform that we have taken to the broader health reforms – we will listen to patients, we will listen to the community, and we will listen to clinicians, including nurses – and, of course, the NSWNA.”*

Transcripts of both speeches can be found on <http://www.nswnurses.asn.au/>.



**ANF Assistant Federal Secretary Yvonne Chaperon, Prime Minister Julia Gillard and ANF Federal Secretary Lee Thomas meet to discuss the *Because We Care* campaign.**



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Working Together