

MEDIA RELEASE

4 August 2017

ACN welcomes Opposition's stance on aged care

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) commends Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's acknowledgement of the need to address nurse staffing levels and training in the aged care sector.

Mr Shorten made his comments on the ABC's 7.30 program last night: "When it comes to aged-care facilities, no question in my mind, we need to make sure if we have the right number of nurses on duty, are we getting the right training for people, are we charging too much in our TAFE to train people to do this vital work in the future?" Mr Shorten said.

ACN is concerned by the lack of Commonwealth standards or regulations prescribing minimum staffing or skills mix requirements for Australia's residential aged care facilities (RACFs). It has called for registered nurses to provide leadership and clinical supervision in RACFs at all times.

In July 2016, ACN took the official view that regulation of RACFs should, at a minimum, mandate a requirement that a registered nurse (RN) be on-site and available at all times to promote safety and well-being for residents.

ACN believes that care delivered in RACFs must be led by RNs. Due to the growing prevalence of co-morbidities associated with physical and cognitive decline, polypharmacy, and greater professional accountability, increasingly the residential aged care population requires complex care that can only be provided under the direct supervision of RNs.

ACN Chief Executive Officer, Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward, said: "Nurses are first and foremost patient advocates and act in the best interest of their patients.

"We are pleased the ALP has recognised the need to address staffing levels and training within the aged care sector, and we continue to demand support for a legislated minimum number of registered nurses (RN's) in residential aged care.

"All aged care residents have a right to the highest level of care, which can only be provided by an appropriately-skilled workforce, which includes an RN being onsite and available 24/7."

The Australian College of Nursing's position statement *The Role of registered nurses in aged care* is available at <https://www.acn.edu.au/policy>

-ENDS-

For interviews contact ACN Executive Assistant Narelle Barrie on 02 6283 3459 or Kristen Connell on 0400 054 227.



Notes to Editors: The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is the national professional organisation for all nurse leaders and its aim is to ensure that the Australian community receives quality nursing care now and in the future. ACN is a membership organisation with members in all states and territories, health care settings and nursing specialties. ACN is also the Australian member of the International Council of Nurses headquartered in Geneva. An organisation not afraid to challenge industry issues affecting the nursing profession or Australia's health care, ACN is a well-connected and educated national body that drives change with people of influence to enhance the delivery of health services to the Australian community. ACN's membership includes nurses in roles of influence, including senior nurses, organisational leaders, academics and researchers.

Social media channels: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/acnursing>
Twitter: https://twitter.com/acn_tweet
LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/australian-college-of-nursing>
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/acn_nursing