



MEDIA RELEASE

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Donato to Pass Landmark Nursing Homes Bill: “Seniors deserve certainty”

Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party Member for Orange Philip Donato today announced that within a fortnight he will be introducing his party’s bill to keep registered nurses in nursing homes.

This comes after the bill that was introduced by Robert Brown passed the Upper House unanimously yesterday, with the Government switching the support in favour of the bill at the last minute.

“I hope to move ahead with the Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill next Thursday in time for International Nurses Day, because nursing home residents deserve certainty.

“Withholding an older person’s access to a registered nurse when they are in a nursing home is unacceptable.

“I’m concerned by reports that senior National Party Ministers have been running a surreptitious fear campaign in the regions to convince people that nursing homes may have to close if this passes. That’s rubbish!

“This requirement was the law for almost 50 years until it was inadvertently removed by Federal legislation in 2015. If any facilities were really to close, then we wouldn’t have had nursing homes over the last 50 years.

“Keeping at least one registered nurse on staff 24/7 is not an onerous requirement, and has three benefits:

1. A registered nurse can administer pain relief medications stronger than a paracetamol (Panadol) tablet.
2. Registered nurses prevent unnecessary hospital admissions by being able to respond quickly to critical incidents.
3. They know when to administer medications and when not to, such as withholding a blood pressure lowering medication when blood pressure is already low.”

“Our elderly in nursing homes deserve to be treated with the dignity and a high level of expert care. Giving seniors second best is just not good enough and I won’t stand for it.”

Background:

Since 1971 the requirement has been for nursing home operators to have at least one registered nurse on staff at all times, 24/7. This was scrapped in 2015. It was included in:

- Section 104, Public Health Act 2010
- Section 52, Public Health Act 1991
- Section 39, Nursing Homes Act 1988
- Section 30, Private Health Establishments Act 1982
- Section 2(m), Private Hospitals (Amendment) Act 1971



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