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## National Party in disarray on eve of nursing homes bill

Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party Member for Orange Philip Donato today said he was astonished at how the National party is in disarray at his bill to keep registered nurses in New South Wales nursing homes.

Mr Donato is moving this bill tomorrow in the Legislative Assembly on the eve of International Nurses Day on Friday.

“Since this bill to keep registered nurses in nursing homes passed the Upper House without amendment last week, as far as I’m concerned the debate is over,” Mr Donato said.

“The Government has no choice but to support this bill, or explain why they are changing their position at the last minute.

“This mandatory requirement was law for the best part of 50 years before it was scrapped inadvertently by Federal legislation on 1 July 2014.

“It’s supported widely by the Country Womens Association, the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association, Combined Pensioners, COTA NSW, and a whole host of medical and aged care groups.

“Some National Party MPs, such as Adam Marshall and Michael Johnsen, have been running a fear campaign saying this bill will cause smaller nursing homes to close, but that is wrong for two reasons.

“Firstly, the Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party bill only restores this requirement for facilities providing a high level of residential care.

“Secondly, former Health Minister Jillian Skinner grandfathered this requirement to all existing nursing homes that were operating prior to 1 July 2014 under the Public Health Amendment (Nursing Homes) Regulation 2014. This safety-net only has been missing from new nursing homes starting after that date.

“We just want to restore this requirement for everybody – at the very least for high care facilities. I have no idea why the National Party oppose this, but like with the greyhound racing ban, they’re showing how out of touch with rural people they are.

“It would be perfect to see this bill pass the day before International Nurses Day on Friday.”

**NOTE TO EDITORS: The Lower House will debate the bill from 10:30am tomorrow (May 11). The public gallery will be filled with nurses, doctors, aged care groups, and other bodies supporting this bill.**

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