



The Hon. Robert Borsak MLC

Parliament of New South Wales

Legislative Council

Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party



MEDIA RELEASE

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Gaols Have More Access to Nurses Than Nursing Homes: Government Won't Say Why

Shooters Fishers and Farmers Party MLC Robert Borsak today slammed the New South Wales Government for refusing to justify their opposition to having minimum standards for registered nurses in nursing homes.

This comes after Mr Borsak revealed that Long Bay Gaol has registered nurses on shift 24/7, and other prisons have registered nurses on shift 7 days per week.

"Prisoners have greater access to a registered nurse than our elderly in nursing homes, and that's not right," Mr Borsak said.

"Convicted criminals like Milton Orkopolous, Neddy Smith and Roger Rogerson are guaranteed 24/7 nursing care in Long Bay Gaol, but they wouldn't get this guarantee if they were in a nursing home."

"It's disgusting that the day before International Nurses Day that the National Party and the Liberal Party opposed our bill to keep registered nurses in nursing homes where high needs care is provided.

"I have no idea why Health Minister Brad Hazzard is happy to see Long Bay Gaol's in-house 'nursing home' facility having registered nurses on shift round the clock (other prisons having nurses on shift 7 days per week) while ordinary nursing home residents don't enjoy the same guarantee.

"One tragic example concerns the way that Prince of Wales Hospital served an eviction notice on an 89-year-old blind woman, Elizabeth Rogers, admitted as a patient in their Emergency Department in 2015.

"She was literally evicted from hospital because her nursing home had no registered nurse on shift over the weekend, so they refused to have her return there.

Mr Borsak asked the following question of the Minister for Health in Upper House Question Time on Wednesday, and the Government refused to give an answer on the spot:

"Is the Minister aware that registered nurses are required to be on shift seven days per week in our State's prisons and 24-7 in the Long Bay Correctional Centre?"

"Given that these minimum staffing standards are not required for aged-care facilities, why is the Government's policy to give incarcerated criminals regular access to a registered nurse but deny the same standard to elderly residents in nursing homes?"

Source: NSW Parliament Hansard, 24 May 2017

The Public Health Amendment (Registered Nurses in Nursing Homes) Bill 2016 was opposed by the Liberal Party and the National Party in the Legislative Assembly on May 11, despite giving it unanimous support in the Upper House a week before.

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