



# Trish Doyle MP

## Member for Blue Mountains



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### **New South Wales Parliament Legislative Assembly**

### **RN 24/7 in Aged Care Petition**

**10 September 2015**

I stand here proudly for the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association [NMA] and the many residents in nursing homes and aged-care facilities across this State, their friends, families and supporters. I stand here on behalf of approximately 27,000 people who are signatories to a petition insisting that the New South Wales Government preserve the critical role of the registered nurses and directors of nursing in aged-care facilities across this State. This petition has received considerable community support. People want to have a registered nurse on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. People know that this arrangement is essential for safe, high-quality care.

Whilst the Minister for Health has enacted an interim arrangement effective until the end of this year, in order to consult with the aged-care community it is incumbent upon those of us in this place to represent our constituencies and what they are asking for. I have worked alongside the nurses in my electorate over the past few years and I have talked to many older residents throughout the Blue Mountains and this State and their families. People tell me that the very real difference that having enough staff, led by registered nurses, makes is enormous to both the care that can be provided and the care that is received. This should be the core foundation of quality aged care. Without registered nurses, many more aged-care residents would be sent to emergency departments in hospitals, placing even more stress on our already overstretched health system and causing unnecessary distress to patients and their families.

Allow me to spell out and have recorded here the reasons it is absolutely essential we support and legislate for registered nurses in nursing homes 24/7. Some of the things registered nurses do is: provide skilled clinical care to nursing home residents with complex high-care needs; undertake specialised wound care and nursing procedures for urinary catheters, nasogastric tubes and a range of otomies; minimise unnecessary transfer to emergency departments; and provide palliative care to the

dying so that they do not have to go to hospital. They oversee multiple medications, including assessing the side effects, and they provide support and supervision to the entire and valued nursing team—our wonderful enrolled nurses and our assistants in nursing. It is important that I place the voices of our nurses who work in the aged-care sector on record.

Jenny said:

*I've seen many sad cases of people in their 80s and 90s being sent to hospital due to poor staffing. They end up dying in unfamiliar surroundings.*

Louise said:

*My skills give me the ability to spot the difference between a change in conditions that requires immediate attention and one that can wait until the doctor comes the next day.*

I recently received a letter from a doctor in my electorate, who wrote:

*I have had decades of experience looking after patients in nursing homes, hostels and other residential care facilities. These homes generally have my home phone number so that I can provide continuity of care after hours. This is important as I know my patients and can advise as appropriate.*

It is an immense advantage having an RN on duty at all times as I know that I can talk to someone who is medically trained and who can give me the precise and relevant information that I need to make a decision about medical management.

I fully support the view that the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners has put in support of the NMA campaign:

*I fully support such a view based on my own personal experience and I encourage you to take up this challenge in the state parliament.*

I acknowledge the efforts of the following people in this campaign of significance. I thank my Mountains nursing "warriors": Shirley Ross-Shuley, Jocelyn Hoffman, Annette Peters, Louise Stammers, Peter Buckney and Peter Lammiman. I thank the NMA organisers: Jon Farry, Rita Martin and Stella Topaz. I thank those who spoke with passion, commitment and knowledge at the rally today: Lucille McKenna, Margaret Zanghi, Dr Yvonne McMasters and Des Hartree. I also thank NMA New South Wales General Secretary Brett Holmes. Currently New South Wales law requires that a registered nurse is on duty at all times in nursing homes. This is how it must remain. The Minister for Health is expected to make a decision soon about the future of registered nurses. I seek to extend my speaking time by one minute.

**Extension of time not granted.**

**ACTING-SPEAKER** (Mr Adam Marshall): Order! The member's time has expired.