



**Submission to
Inquiry into the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio Disclosure) Bill 2018
Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport**

September 2018

Combined Pensioners & Superannuants Association of NSW Inc (CPSA)

Address: Level 3, 17-21 Macquarie Street, Parramatta NSW 2150 **ABN:** 11 244 559 772

Phone: (02) 9281 3588 **Country Callers:** 1800 451 488 **Facsimile:** (02) 9281 9716

Email: cpsa@cpsa.org.au **Website:** www.cpsa.org.au **Donations:** 1800 451 488

CPSA is a non-profit, non-party-political membership association founded in 1931 which serves pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees. CPSA has 98 branches and affiliated organisations with a combined membership of over 23,000 people living throughout NSW. CPSA's aim is to improve the standard of living and well-being of its members and constituents. CPSA receives funding support from the NSW Government Departments of Family & Community Services and Health and the Australian Government Department of Social Service.

CPSA supports the quarterly publication of ratios of aged care recipients to staff members for each residential care service as set out in the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio Disclosure) Bill 2018.

Prospective residents and the families of prospective residents need information on which to base their choice of residential aged care facility other than the information on provider websites, the uninformative assessment reports published by the Aged Care Quality Agency and slick talk of provider sales reps.

The number of staff and their qualifications largely determine the quality of care at residential aged care facilities. It is therefore a no-brainer that providers should make this information available. In fact, providers with nothing to hide do disclose this type of information to people looking for themselves or a friend or relative.

It is the providers who do not disclose publicly information about staffing in their facilities that are the real targets in the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio Disclosure) Bill 2018.

The residential aged care sector is claiming that staffing ratio disclosure is complex, by which it presumably means: too complex.

This is simply not true. There is nothing complex for hours of care provided to be totalled, classified according to staff qualification and according to the type of care provided and for ratios to be calculated.

If this is done for each of the roughly 3,000 residential aged care facilities in Australia, a picture will emerge of relative provider performance in the area of staffing. The staffing information discovered in this way is not absolute and is not tied to quality descriptors, but it does tell people where a provider ranks on staffing among their peers.

This information is essential consumer information and has no bearing on compliance with aged care standards.

Implementing publication of staffing ratios would be a great step forward and one aged care providers need not fear if they are genuinely trying to provide the best care they can with the funding they have. They will be in among the providers with some of the better staffing ratios.

CPSA does not support the implementation of aged care reforms supports as the outcome of recent inquiries. It is CPSA's position that the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety should be allowed to do its work before significant reform is undertaken, and that any reforms implemented pending the Royal Commission should be confined to:

1. initiatives to create greater transparency and better consumer information; and
2. to a crackdown on inadequate staffing through the current accreditation standards which following the Oakden scandal proved to be capable of working a lot better than CPSA had ever thought possible.

Passing the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio Disclosure) Bill 2018 is appropriate and a great way to take action on aged care prior to the Royal Commission into Safety and Quality of Aged Care.

Recommendation:

That the Aged Care Amendment (Staffing Ratio Disclosure) Bill 2018 be passed.