

Staff ratios should be disclosed to the public for the following reasons:

- The public is entitled to have information about the aged care facilities they are going to spend the rest of their lives in, or where their loved ones are going to be cared for. The care provided in facilities is by far the most important component of their function. Attractive surroundings may be nice, but do not always mean good care.
- Providers receive a considerable amount of government funding, ie "our" money, and we are entitled to know how this is being spent.
- The proportion of for-profit providers is steadily increasing, and this the need for shareholders and businessmen to make a profit from our elderly. Transparency around how they do this is imperative.
- The ratio of trained nurses has steadily decreased in ACFs over the past years, and this is of great concern. If prospective residents/families have information about the number of Registered and Enrolled nurses, competition will force the under performers to improve their staffing, or force them out of the market.
- With staff ratio data available, comprehensive research will be able to be undertaken, as is the case in the US, where staff ratios are mandated, and have been proven to affect the outcomes of ACF residents. They have evidence that staff qualifications and numbers do impact on measurable outcomes such as falls, pressure wounds, weight loss etc. In Australia we have subjective, ineffective regulations.
- I am about to move my mother, a frail, vulnerable 94- year-old with advanced dementia, to her third ACF. If I'd had the relevant information, eg staff ratios, on the two facilities where she has received poor care, I would not be in this position. Moving a person with dementia is bot an easy decision to make.