



Mrs Barbara Veness
4407 Pacific Highway
Warrell Creek NSW 2447

AGEING INQUIRY
TERMS OF REFERENCE

To inquire into and report on the long term strategies to address ageing of the Australian population over the next 40 years.

The Chairman,

I wish to thank Luke Hartsuyker MP for inviting me to the Community Forum on 19th May 2003 at Coffs Harbour in relation to Age Care.

The following points that I spoke on require immediate attention or you will not have a **WORKING** Aged Care System in 40 years. As a Level 111 Certificate Nurse in my 40's (which, you would find, if you did one of your costly surveys is the average age of today's Aged Care Nurses), I see it collapsing within the next 5 - 10 years.

1 **FUNDING**

More money is required for more nurses to ease the stress and strain on existing staff. For the upgrade of equipment - beds, lifters, wheelchairs, special gel chairs required for frail residents, without which a large percentage of resident life style is greatly restricted. Regulations on manual handling has made this a necessity.

2 **WAGES - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - APPRECIATION**

As an ANI in an Aged Care Facility I am working with People that require 24hr hands on care. These are old, frail and sick people with Dementia, Cancer, Stroke or a combination of these and many more illnesses, not someone that has come in for an operation and will be going home in a week, I'm talking scared and dying. Our working ratio is approximately 1 nurse per 10 residents ranging from 100% hands-on to 75% hands-on. Compared to some facilities this is considered good.

I began work in 1988 on a rate of \$8.90 per hour casual and 15 years later as PPT I get \$12.86 per hour. I, nor my work mates, do not consider that a \$4.00/hr rise over 15 years a fair acknowledgement of the kind of work we do. In relation to hospital nursing we feel that we are looked upon as second grade and not worthy of the same recognition. It would be nice to know that aged care nursing is recognized as important and necessary.

The going rate for stacking groceries on a shelf at a supermarket store is approx. \$14.50, even the cleaning staff at my facility are on a higher rate to mop floors and wash dishes - must be very stressful jobs.

This has to change and **NOW** not sometime in the next 40 years. You can't expect people to become nurses when they can get an easier job at a higher pay rate.

3 **TRAINING**

If you intend to equip the Aged Care industry with young nurses then you require **HANDS-ON** training. We have potential nurses coming to us from Tech. with their Level 111 Certificate in one hand and their book in the other and they 'know it all'. The problem is the book doesn't fit the Resident. They have no idea how to relate to the elderly, therefore can not deal with many situations. We then become the **TEACHER**. The average teacher is on \$45,000.00 / year, we receive no extra in our pay for training our nurses, 75% of which may stay 3 months. This is an added stress factor to our job.

You have got to equip and fund a number of facilities as Hands-on training taking this responsibility away from existing overworked nurses. We understand that everyone has to start somewhere, but in our area of nursing it takes more than a few dummies and three days with the real thing to learn just the basics.

I hope this gives you the kind of view of our job that you are looking for and the concerns that we have.

Thank you



Barbara Veness.