

To Whom It May Concern

I am a CEO of a stand alone Low Care Community Not for Profit Aged Care Facility. I have been working in the Aged Care Industry over a period of 19.5 years. In that time I have worked on the floor as a Division 1 Nurse and for the past 13 years in management both in private and Not for Profit.

My biggest concern is naturally the funding we get from the Government for all levels of care. Having worked in both high and low care environments I can honestly say that it is more difficult to cover the care required for low care residents. A majority of time the residents requirements for low care are a lot more time consuming than the high care residents. High care residents are often unable to do things for themselves so they do not ring buzzers and often unable to ask for things so they are cared for when it suits the staff. In low care the residents will request to have things done for them whenever they want which is not always practical for staff. This can cause additional pressure for staff as they cannot ignore residents but the time taken attending to all their needs is not reflective in the funding we receive for low care.

Another concern is that when the Government recently announced that they were spending so much on training staff through the Better Skills program for Aged Care I do not think the public would be aware that it all sounds very good but not at all practical. For example I will give you an outline of what we experienced:

When the program was announced we recognized that we needed more staff to be trained as an enrolled nurse (Div 2 nurse) so we advertised internally for any personal care staff who would be interested in the program. I had a very good response but the requirement was for these staff to attend 3 days per week in a class room setting which meant that they would have to drop shifts as we are in no position to pay for the days they don't work. It also meant that by doing this the staff could not afford to drop any shifts because they were supporting families. So really the whole up-skilling program has been a waste of time for a lot of providers in regional areas; extremely good in theory, but just not practical.

Wages for Nurses and staff generally in Aged Care are lower than acute nursing which makes no sense what so ever. How on earth are we to attract quality staff if aged care is not equal to acute settings. The government has to think and act in a positive manner about aged care otherwise we will continually struggle in all areas of aged care.

My final comment would be about the funding increase as from 1st July. It works out to be 1.8% increase and much the same last year. The Government must put aged care on their agenda and not just ignore the continual concerns we all have. What will happen when they have reached the age of entering aged care facilities?