

February 15 2011

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION ON THE
'CARING FOR OLDER AUSTRALIANS'
DRAFT REPORT**

Firstly I would like to congratulate those involved in what is an extremely comprehensive examination of the aged care industry.

I would like to make comment on an area of reform which I feel is acknowledged however not addressed as well as it might have been.

For real reform in the aged care industry to occur competitive rates of pay for those who work in the industry is essential.

This must be addressed and it must be addressed now.

As everyone in the industry is aware registered nurse (RN's) are paid approximately \$300 per week less than their colleagues in the acute care sector. There is simply no difference in providing care that may save someone's life and providing care that allows someone to die with dignity and there is no difference in the levels of skill required by an RN to ensure that this happens.

Nurses are professionals and make choices regarding the various sectors of care in which they work because they are highly trained and provide exceptional care in any setting; not because one area of nursing is more worthy than another.

People in all industries understand that for that industry to be viable people must be paid competitively and fairly and unless there are changes to the wages of nurses working in aged care there will be no reform.

I have worked in the aged care sector for almost twenty years and every year it gets harder to attract and retain staff and in almost every case the reason given by RN's for leaving the sector is the lack of wage parity with the acute care sector.

It is simply not sufficient to argue the case for change and not address the elephant in the room.

Yours sincerely

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