

Tuesday 08 February 2022

Aged care nurses rally in Canberra for immediate action for industry in crisis

ACTU President Michele O’Neil will be joining aged care nurses in a Covid-safe protest in Canberra today, to demand the Morrison Government take immediate action to address an industry in crisis.

The Morrison Government’s avoidance of responsibility and lack of planning has led to the country’s aged care system falling to the brink of collapse. Residents are sick and dying and workers are exhausted and angry. Under Scott Morrison’s watch we have:

- Understaffed aged care centre’s
- Underpaid workers and a refusal to support permanent wage increases
- Not enough free and accessible rapid antigen tests (RATs)
- Inadequate PPE
- A failed vaccine rollout and failed delivery of booster shots
- A failure to urgently implement the Royal Commission’s recommendations

Aged care has been one of the most critical workforces in the country throughout the pandemic, workers risk their health and safety continuously during outbreaks to ensure the safety of residents. Their tireless work has kept residents alive and helped families navigate the pandemic.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil:

“Aged care residents are suffering and dying because the Morrison Government has all but abandoned their responsibility for aged care. The industry is on the verge of collapse and unions have been left no option but to come to Canberra and demand action.

“Half of Australian aged care centres are now battling staffing shortages and more than 700 centres currently have Covid outbreaks -it’s not another task force or inquiry that’s needed, its immediate action.

“Every day that the Morrison Government fails to act on minimum staffing ratios, delivering a decent permanent pay rise for underpaid workers, and providing PPE and RATs, is another day that the crisis is worsening, and workers and residents are getting sick.

“Aged care workers have been critical for keeping the elderly family members of Australians safe throughout the pandemic. They’ve risked their lives and worked while underpaid, understaffed and without timely vaccines, boosters or PPE – it’s time for the Morrison Government to deliver for aged care residents and the workers who care for them.”

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