

# Member talking points for local candidate meetings

The following bullets provide some of the key facts and points that you can raise in your discussions with candidates on the Fair Pay issue for the next election. They are only a guide, but should assist with a wider national perspective.

## About the New Zealand Aged Care Association



The **leading voice** of aged care in New Zealand, the largest association representing the aged residential care (ARC) sector.



Over **600 members**, representing 90% or approximately 35,000 beds from New Zealand's ARC sector.



Just under 70% of all NZACA member facilities are **privately owned or funded** by charitable, religious or welfare organisations.

## Supporting Fair Pay for New Zealand's aged care nurses

### About our nurses

- » More than 5,000 registered nurses work in aged residential care homes in New Zealand.
- » On average, aged care nurses earn at least \$10,000 a year less than nurses who work in public hospitals.
- » That's not because they are any less skilled or important, but because of years of underfunding of the ARC by successive governments and undervaluing of the care of older people.
- » Covid-19 has reminded us just how important our nurses are. Thanks to their skill and leadership more than 99% of rest homes in New Zealand had zero Covid-19 cases.

### Why are aged care nurses special?

- » They care for the health and wellbeing of more than 36,000 of our most vulnerable people in 650 rest homes around New Zealand.
- » They are expert clinicians, managing multiple complex health conditions, as well as palliative and end of life care – all without the support of the clinical teams available in hospitals.



- » They are team leaders in charge of health care workers who tend to the needs of our most fragile.
- » They bring humanity to healthcare, building genuinely loving relationships with people in their care and friendships with their whanau.

### Why are they not paid the same as nurses who work in public hospitals?

- » Nurses who work in aged care have been undervalued for many years, a symptom of the historic underfunding of rest homes.
- » The amount of pay aged care nurses receive is directly related to the amount of funding rest homes receive from District Health Boards – a per bed, per day rate based on the level of care each resident is assessed for by DHBs when they admit them to rest homes – rest home, hospital, dementia or psychogeriatric level care.

### Losing nurses when we need them most

- » In 2018, the Government, very rightly, improved pay and conditions for nurses who work in public hospitals in recognition of their value. DHBs were also required to recruit 500 more nurses. As a result, since then rest homes have continued to lose valued nurses to District Health Boards seeking better pay – which rest home providers are not funded to match.
- » Those rest home providers that can and do pay their nurses more have a retirement village to cross-subsidise their rest home offering. But contrary to popular opinion, rest homes are not profitable businesses. They rely wholly or largely on capped Government funding.
- » Indeed, the sector is a broad church with a range of ownership structures, from corporate and private to trust, religious, welfare-run organisations and not-for-profit entities.

### Research and reports

- » The Independent Review of Covid-19 Clusters in Aged Residential Care Facilities highlights the substantive work of the sector in preventing and managing Covid-19 outbreaks – this is largely due to the leadership and skills of aged care nurses.

*“Acknowledgement by the Ministry of the substantive work done by the ARC sector to prevent and manage the COVID 19 cluster outbreaks.” (p. 3.).*

- » The recent Review of the Health and Disability System released by Heather Simpson on 16 June has called for pay parity issues to be addressed for all professions working across the health system.

*“The system should seek to address pay parity issues for professions working in different parts of the system” (p. 195).*

- » Country reports<sup>1</sup> on the impact of Covid-19 on rest homes globally are showing just how safe New Zealand rest homes compared to other countries are – for example of all the UK’s rest home residents, 5.3% were confirmed or suspected to have died from COVID-19, compared with 0.4% in Germany, and 0.04% in New Zealand.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/28/covid-19-risk-of-death-in-uk-care-homes-13-times-higher-than-in-germany>

## What we want

1.

It is time to value aged care nurses and ensure the sector is funded to pay them what they are worth in parity with their peers who work in public hospitals.

2.

More than 15,000 people have supported this by signing our Fair Pay campaign petition during June 2020.

3.

The cost to Government of funding the sector to ensure pay parity for the 5,000 aged care nurses in New Zealand – an increase of at least \$10,000 per annum per nurse.

4.

Considering Budget 2020 injected \$4.37 billion into District Health Boards – we reckon there’s plenty to go round.