

PSI SAFE AND EFFECTIVE
STAFFING WORKING GROUP
PRESENTATION
11-12 MAY 2015

Beth Mohle
Secretary
Queensland
Nurses' Union



BACKGROUND

- Lack of effective workload management processes a critical concern for QNU members across all sectors – public, private and aged care
- Implementation of existing industrially mandated tools (e.g. BPF in public sector since 2001) extremely problematic – especially since election on conservative state government in 2012
- Massive job losses since 2012 - almost 5000 in total in public sector, 1800 of these nursing and midwifery – along with cuts to services and privatisation
- Election of a minority Labor government on 31 January 2015 – committed to legislating minimum ratios
- Intensive work underway now to ensure delivery of Nursing Policy Platform (NPP)



“RATIOS SAVES LIVES” CAMPAIGN

- Campaign launched in context of state election - Jan 2015
- Aim is to make visible what is current invisible – the value of nursing and midwifery work
- Applies to all sectors – but establish precedent in public sector first via legislating minimum ratios and proper application of BPF
- Long term campaign – complexities given difficulties legislating in private sector and aged care (federally regulated)
- Campaign focus on staffing AND skill mix
- Key element is also aim to establish standardised public reporting framework or dataset across all sectors
- Evidence based campaign – reliant on Prof Linda Aiken’s international research – funding for research a key component of NPP budget submission
- Member and community education critical – next phase to be launched in conjunction with QNU annual conference in July
- Building member/activist hope critical – especially given recent hostile political experience – organising strategy central element



CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

- Intensive NPP work underway – first cabinet submission and initial budget submission made – two more Cabinet submissions pending in June and July
- Context of unanticipated change in government – small no of policy commitments by Labor – Ratios commitment the most ambitious
- Treasury catastrophising the budget situation (as they do the world over) and in need of a reframing away from short term “cashable savings” mindset
- Challenge is how to make visible the invisible and seek to quantify the worth of our work – not be afraid of the evidence and becoming more economically literate
- Timeframe for legislation – starting work now with aim for 1 July 2016 implementation – though new grad employment to commence from July 2015



CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

- Cost of implementing ratios not insignificant (\$180 million to \$294 million per year) – not including savings from decreased adverse events and litigation and improved outcomes
- Staffing deficit significant – over 2,300FTE shortfall
- Highlights significant non-compliance with existing industrially mandated tool
- Staging of implementation required – agreement required on this (QNU position is to start with regional, rural and remote and areas of identified need)
- Focus and speed is of the essence given uncertain political context and tensions
- Other priorities also at play – e.g. addressing other unfair legislation of previous government – e.g. industrial relations



OBSERVATIONS

- KISS principle and repetition critical – Keep it Simple Stupid
- Not easy to translate complex nuanced ideas into simple messages – why we are holding this workshop
- No matter what approach taken it is hard work – never ending struggle
- Different narratives and ways of thinking/preferences at play – “caring” versus economic also professional and industrial frames
- Need both easy to understand simple messages AND sophisticated and robust tools/methodologies – hence ratios the floor and BPF the tool to build above that
- Nobody has all the answers – need to be prepared to learn from each other by sharing successes and failures
- Community and member based campaigning will be central to our success – alignment of interests around patient safety



THE CAMPAIGN CONTINUES

