Ms Beth Mohle  
Secretary  
Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union  
GPO Box 1289  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Ms Mohle

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 August 2019 regarding the urgency motion around the unexpected evacuation of care recipients at the residential aged care facilities located at Earle Haven Retirement Village. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring the safety and quality of care for older Australians. Commonwealth-funded aged care providers are required by law to meet the Aged Care Quality Standards (Standards) to ensure that quality care and services are provided to consumers. Where they fail to do this, there is a regulatory framework in place to bring them back into compliance as quickly as possible.

In accordance with the new Standards, approved providers of residential aged care must ensure they have a workforce that is sufficient, skilled and qualified to provide safe, respectful and quality care and services. The Standards do not prescribe the qualifications required by staff, or the number of staff required to be employed by an aged care service as this may vary depending on the care needs and profile of care recipients.

The Government's view is that aged care providers are best able to determine their workforce needs and staff skill mixes. This is because the relationship between staffing in aged care homes and the quality of the care provided is complex.

I have commissioned an independent inquiry, led by Ms Kate Carnell, into the events surrounding the unexpected closure of the aged care facilities operated by People Care Pty Ltd in Nerang, Queensland.

This inquiry will examine the circumstances leading to a collapse in the provision of care services for the residents of the facility and the impact and consequences of the event.

It will also look at whether it could have been prevented, along with the management and operational structure of the service and the governance, management and operational structure of People Care and its sub-contractor HelpStreet.
The outcome of this inquiry will assist us to understand why this situation occurred, what we can do to prevent this type of event in the future and that those responsible are held to account. The terms of reference can be located via the Department of Health’s website: www.health.gov.au.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

Richard Colbeck