



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

General Secretary: Brett Holmes | Assistant General Secretary: Judith Kiejda

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4 January, 2014

Nurses Rally to Defend Medicare

Acting General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA), Judith Kiejda, today said nurses would turn out in numbers to today's rally in defence of Medicare, to be held out Sydney Town Hall at 1pm.

"For decades now Medicare has been sacrosanct - above politics. The idea that all Australians can see a doctor to get medical attention whenever they need to is cherished by almost all of us," Ms Kiejda said.

"Wage and salary earners pay the Medicare levy to make that possible - so anyone can get treatment whether they are rich or poor. Money should never be a barrier to medical care in Australia.

"Now just months after the new Abbott Government comes to power, it's already under attack. Mr Abbott promised 'no surprises' yet in just a couple of months we've had an attempt to renege on the Gonski school funding agreements, question marks over the promised National Disability Insurance Scheme they promised to keep and now this.

"No one said anything about destroying Medicare as we know it before the election. Now they are floating the idea of a charge to see a doctor which would go up every year. And they are talking about similar charges in hospital emergency departments.

"People are entitled to feel cheated.

"The last time a Coalition Government won with an unexpected big majority they pulled a similar stunt. It was called Work Choices. And they said nothing about it before the election. Well, that cost them the very next election.

"NSW nurses and midwives want this new Government to understand clearly - an attack on Medicare, forcing pensioners and everyone else to pay to see a doctor when they have already paid a levy for years, that will have exactly the same result.

"Australians hate being lied to and they resent being forced to pay for what they've already paid for.

"I urge anyone who can attend to join us at the rally today, to send this message loud and clear - hands off Medicare," Ms Kiejda said.



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The NSWNMA supports the international movement for the introduction of a Financial Transactions Tax (FTT) in Australia and internationally.

A tiny levy on market based finance trades, currency speculation, derivatives and share trading would provide ample funds to maintain the services Australians expect. And it would be paid only by a handful of the wealthiest among us - people who are notorious for paying little or no tax currently.

Experts have estimated that an FTT of just 0.05% in Australia from 2005 would have raised approximately \$48 billion in just the next three years.

“That’s more than enough to fill any budget shortfalls without forcing pensioners to choose between food and seeing the doctor,” Ms Kiejda said.

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