



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Wrong again, Mr Ajaka

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has called on the Minister for Disability Services, John Ajaka, to apologise to residents and staff of the Stockton Centre in Newcastle for attempting to use them for political mileage and misleading the NSW Parliament.

During question time on Tuesday, Mr Ajaka purported to give an update on the government's redevelopment of the Stockton Centre, but rather than explain the real reasons behind his decision to privatise all disability services, the Minister deliberately took the opportunity to confuse the position of unions.

The NSWNMA has clearly advocated on behalf of residents at the Stockton Centre, their families, carers and staff to be extended the courtesy of choice. That is, the ability to choose between publicly-run or privately-run disability care services. Mr Ajaka's decision to privatise all disability services across NSW by 2018 removes that choice for everyone.

Mr Ajaka also told the parliament he had met with NSWNMA representatives to address concerns held by nursing staff, yet those same representatives are still waiting hear how the government intends to maintain the level of highly skilled staff required, after all disability services shift to the non-government sector and what accountabilities would be enforced.

The Minister claimed staff had been "briefed comprehensively" on transition arrangements, yet NSWNMA members working at the Stockton Centre remain in the dark on what would happen to their entitlements if they agreed to transition to the privately-operated model.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, reiterated today that clients and families of the Stockton Centre had a right to choose the care which best met their individual needs.

"We will continue to fight this to ensure all involved are extended the fairness, respect and dignity they deserve," Mr Holmes said.

"It's disappointing to see the Minister deliberately misleading the community for his own political point scoring, when in fact he is abdicating from his own duty of care."

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