



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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11 March, 2015

Locals seek a better way for disability care

Members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA), residents, carers, community members, disability advocates and local union groups will gather at Newcastle Panthers tonight to discuss the future of local disability services.

Residents of publicly-run care centres such as the Stockton Centre, Tomaree Lodge and Kanangra Centre near Morriset have spent the past twelve months raising awareness of their concerns over the NSW government's plan to privatise all state disability services by 2018, if not beforehand.

Many residents and their carers believe the NSW government has used the much-needed National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) as an excuse to abrogate its duty of care responsibilities and replace publicly-run disability care services with privately-run services.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said fourteen thousand jobs across the state, including 1200 disability care nurses, are being forcibly transferred to the non-government sector.

"Nurses advocate for those in our care because that is our obligation and part of our role as professional carers," Mr Holmes said.

"Clients with complex needs must be provided with adequate nursing care, but there are still no guarantees this level of care will occur once disability services are fully privatised.

"Without the government as a provider of last resort, who will care for those with a disability that no private provider wants or can adequately cater for?"

"We continue to call on the NSW government to ensure every person with a disability continues to receive quality care in a location of their choice and by a provider of their choice – we believe government must retain a role in the provision of services to people with disabilities.

"Clients and families of Stockton Centre, Tomaree and Kanangra have a right to choose the care which best meets their individual needs."

The public forum is being hosted by Newcastle Trades Hall Council in conjunction with the Stockton Hospital Welfare Association. Local carers and families will discuss alternative disability care options for the Hunter. Independent MP Greg Piper will also address the forum, along with Port Stephens ALP Candidate and local solicitor, Kate Washington, regarding the legal framework of the NDIS.

The forum will run from 7pm until 8:30pm at Newcastle Panthers, Cnr King and Union Street.

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