The New South Wales Nurses and Midwives’ Association (NSWNMA) is the registered union for all nurses and midwives in New South Wales. The NSWNMA represents the industrial interests of nurses and midwives employed in NSW in the public, private, aged care and disability sectors. Our role is to protect the interests of nurses, midwives and the nursing and midwifery professions.

The NSWNMA also represents and provides for the professional, educational and industrial welfare of nurses and midwives in government and non-government forums at state, national and international levels.

In 2015 the NSWNMA has approximately 61,000 members and is affiliated to Unions NSW and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). The NSWNMA works in association with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF). NSWNMA members are also members of the New South Wales Branch of the ANMF.
The NSWNMA is an organisation with a rich history. Since the 1930s, our organisation has tirelessly served the industrial and professional interests of nurses and midwives in NSW. We are proud of our achievements: improving the pay and conditions of nurses and midwives in NSW; ensuring that the nursing and midwifery professions are valued both industrially and professionally; strengthening the professional standing of nurses and midwives as clinicians in their own right. We are also committed to speaking out against social injustice in any form and being a credible voice in the health policy debate.

However, there are many challenges ahead of us that could influence the way members deliver care and advocate for patients, and the communities where we all live and work. To this end we are confident that the strategic plan we’ve developed after consultation with our staff and Council will result in an organisation that is effective, highly regarded and influential, capable of delivering outcomes for members individually and collectively.

In NSW, industrial relations with the current government and some private sector employers have descended to a level where meaningful negotiations have not been occurring. The NSW industrial umpire has been rendered powerless and workers’ rights severely undermined. The Federal Government also threatens to whittle away workers’ rights. It is essential in the current climate that we grow our influence in order to win better outcomes for our members. Our members must be empowered to adopt their rights as advocates and committed to engaging with our stakeholders at all levels.

In recent years, health has become a political minefield all health professionals must navigate, but we are steadfast in our belief that no matter the budgets, regulations or policy, our delivery of care should not be compromised. We are immoveable in our belief in an integrated universal health system which promotes the vertical integration of healthcare services in all sectors (public health, private hospitals and services, aged care, disability and community services) to ensure equity and access of care through a coordinated approach to individuals along the lifelong continuum – pre birth to death. Access to healthcare should always be on the basis of clinical need rather than capacity to pay.

Nurses and midwives in all sectors are skilled clinical professionals who make major contributions to their workplaces and to society in general, invaluably supported by their team of assistants in nursing/midwifery. They are active contributors to their local communities. Many of our members have risen to leadership positions in their workplaces, local communities and professional or political spheres. We want to promote these contributions in a positive way to the broader community.

Members are the union, they must be supported, assisted and empowered by the employees of their union and I’m proud that the NSWNMA workplace consists of committed and hardworking individuals who are dedicated to serving the membership of the NSWNMA. Our Vision, Values and Key Directions which make up this Strategic Plan are designed to guide us forward as we face the challenges to our professions and the environments where we work and live in the next five years to 2020.

The five Key Directions that set out our Strategic Plan are:
1. Grow our capacity to influence
2. Be innovative in our advocacy and bargaining
3. Promote a world class, well-funded integrated health system
4. Promote the NSWNMA as a significant and professional advocate for the health system and our members
5. Ensure our people and resources are aligned with our Vision
The strategic context for health in all sectors is changing. The NSWNMA has identified 7 significant drivers that will influence the way health is delivered now and into the future:

- Constant political pressures to cut health budgets have strengthened the argument that Medicare should be reduced to a safety net for the poor. This would inevitably lead to a two-tier system, with substandard services for the poor, escalating demand for private care, increased costs, and the expansion of permanent lobby groups dedicated to stripping funding from Medicare.

- A growing shift towards the emphasis on a ‘user pays’ model, greater privatisation of health and hospital services and co-payments on Medicare. Worldwide economic indicators show that privatisation and cost-shifting to individuals puts inflationary pressure on overall costs, leading to rising social inequity.

- Changes to industrial relations laws in NSW which have limited the ability of public sector unions to negotiate pay rises and take industrial action, and have weakened the industrial umpire. Federal policy tensions that manifest in a push to reduce labour costs, reduce regulation and diminish collective bargaining strength.

- A deficit in the numbers of available health workers exist in all but a very small number of disciplines. Even where excess exists they are primarily location-based excesses, as opposed to numbers enabling the health, community, welfare, aged care and disability sectors to adequately and appropriately staff services.

- The population of older people in Australia is increasing in numbers and as a proportion of the total population. Over one million people currently receive aged care services and this is expected to rise to over 3.5 million people by 2050. The aged care workforce, which includes nurses and assistants in nursing, will need to quadruple to meet this demand.

- Australia’s spending on preventive health is in the bottom third of OECD countries with around 1.5% of total health expenditure allocated for public health purposes. Australia is falling short of addressing modifiable risk factors such as physical inactivity, salt intake, harmful use of alcohol, obesity/diabetes and raised blood pressure.

- Mental ill health is estimated to account for 13% of the total disease burden, yet the total spending on mental health equates to less than 6% of the health budget.
2020 VISION

The New South Wales Nurses and Midwives’ Association (NSWNMA) is a strong, influential union of members respected as a contemporary leader in society for its innovation and achievements.

OUR VALUES

The NSWNMA conducts itself with integrity and courage, demonstrating creative and innovative approaches. The NSWNMA will be an authoritative advocate on behalf of the nursing and midwifery professions, as well as for the community in advancing a world class, well-funded, integrated health system, based on a clear and considered vision for the future.

The NSWNMA will demonstrate ethical and respectful behaviour in its interactions with other organisations and society, whilst ensuring its own workplace is cohesive, fair and dynamic, embracing shared union beliefs.

CORE VALUES:

Integrity
Demonstrate a professional, ethical, cohesive and respectful manner in all our interactions.

Courage
Embrace challenging situations to pursue better outcomes for nurses, midwives and our communities.

Innovation
Utilise leading edge approaches to support and represent our members and communities.

Advocacy
Actively pursue our members’ rights and influence decision makers for a fair and just society.
OUR KEY DIRECTIONS

01 Grow our capacity to influence

02 Be innovative in our advocacy and bargaining

03 Promote a world class, well-funded, integrated health system

04 Promote the NSWNMA as a significant and professional advocate for the health system and our members

05 Ensure our people and resources are aligned with our Vision
KEY DIRECTION

Grow our capacity to influence

In order to win better outcomes for our members, the NSWNMA must grow our influence. Influence comes when NSWNMA members and member leaders have the ability to use their collective power to enforce rights and achieve new outcomes in their workplaces, their sector and within the health system. We define the health system as inclusive of everywhere our members work.

Strategies

• Grow power and influence by increasing the number of NSWNMA members
• Identify new member leaders who can build their workplace influence
• Equip NSWNMA member leaders with the skills, knowledge and confidence to lead members to use their influence
• Grow the number of NSWNMA members actively engaged across the health, disability and aged care systems
• Ensure a focus on retaining as many members as possible

What will success look like?
NSWNMA members and member leaders have greater capacity to influence and enforce safe patient care and rights in workplaces and their communities with confidence, courage and knowledge.

Measures of success

• 75,000 members by 2020
• Member leaders are confident, assertive and well-trained
• Members are confident and educated about enforcing their rights
KEY DIRECTION

Be innovative in our advocacy and bargaining

New challenges and environments require new thinking and continuous improvement of professional and industrial advocacy and bargaining. The NSWNMA will directly represent and organise members and their workplaces, as well as engage with the community and other key stakeholders, to achieve advancement in professional and industrial outcomes.

Strategies

• Review and implement improved NSWNMA approaches and processes for collective bargaining and enforcement of rights
• Ensure that advocacy and bargaining aligns with our growing capacity to influence
• Ensure existing Ratios systems are implemented and enforced properly through member education and member leader vigilance
• Actively use political and community lobbying campaigns to assist with advocacy and bargaining outcomes
• Campaign to extend enforceable staffing arrangements for safe patient care into other sectors
• Review NSWNMA approaches and processes for linking professional advocacy to organising and growth
• Strategically use legal and industrial tribunals to deliver outcomes for individual members or groups

What will success look like?

The NSWNMA will have delivered better industrial and professional outcomes including staffing arrangements that deliver safe patient care in an environment in which members and member leaders are empowered in their workplaces and their communities.

Measures of success

• NSWNMA branches work with member leaders, members and staff, to advocate and enforce rights by using their collective power
• Local enforcement of staffing arrangements that deliver safe patient care by NSWNMA members
• Community support for Ratios as a requirement of safe patient care
• Extension of enforceable staffing arrangements for safe patient care in the private health and aged care sectors
• Enforceable staffing arrangements for safe patient care extended across the public health system
KEY DIRECTION

03

Promote a world class, well-funded, integrated health system

Increasingly, health is becoming a defining political issue in our country and budget decisions impact on the delivery of care. The NSWNMA will be an effective advocate for delivery of quality outcomes of care in an ever-changing health system and influence policy and decision-makers to invest in prevention and universality.

Strategies
• Consult with NSWNMA members on their vision of an integrated health system
• Identify the features of a world class, well-funded, integrated health system
• Develop an education program for NSWNMA members and member leaders
• Develop initiatives, affiliations and partnerships on issues that affect NSWNMA members
• Advocate and influence decision makers on key issues that affect NSWNMA members and the delivery of care

What will success look like?
The NSWNMA will be sought out for its input by decision makers and communities because of our vision of a world class, well-funded, integrated health system.

Measures of success
• Complete discussion paper on a world class, well-funded, integrated health system
• Develop and implement an education program for members on their role as advocates for the health system
• Establish effective and strong coalitions with allies on key issues
• Develop health policy with relevant allies and effective lobbying of governments and other stakeholders around key health issues
KEY DIRECTION

Promote the NSWNMA as a significant and professional advocate for the health system and our members

The NSWNMA must be a viable organisation in the public arena and vocal advocates of health and industrial relations. Our reputation must be protected and our Values actively promoted as a way of enhancing the professional advancement and standing of our members in their workplaces. We will continue to strive to be an organisation relevant to all nurses and midwives, build relationships with key stakeholders and be an influential voice in the communities where our members work and live, as well as nationally and internationally.

Strategies
• Build and develop partnerships with key community, academic and political organisations to promote issues that define our Vision and Key Directions
• Develop risk management strategies to uphold the NSWNMA’s reputation
• Advance and promote nursing and midwifery as professions creatively and through multiple platforms
• Ensure our Vision and Values are reflected in all our communications and actions

What will success look like?
The NSWNMA will be regarded as a highly-respected and progressive organisation that promotes the values of nursing and midwifery. The NSWNMA will be a key communicator on all aspects of the health system.

Measures of success
• Membership growth through recognition of the NSWNMA brand as the only organisation that represents nurses and midwives in NSW
• Increase engagement with community organisations and health allies who seek our input and opinion
• Expand media exposure of the NSWNMA’s Vision and Key Directions
• Grow online engagement amongst members and the broader community
KEY DIRECTION

Ensure our people and resources are aligned with our Vision

The NSWNMA is committed to valuing and developing our staff and managing our resources to enable it to achieve its Vision and Key Directions. Resources are managed in the best interests of NSWNMA members who have placed their trust in good governance of their union.

Strategies

- Further build a workplace culture embedded in the Values of the union
- Organisational governance systems are continually developed and evaluated
- Define roles and relationships within and between NSWNMA teams in line with the Vision and Key Directions
- Implement a workforce development plan that focuses on the education and training required to deliver the Vision
- Develop a systematic review of planning and resources against the Vision and Key Directions across all teams within the NSWNMA

What will success look like?

NSWNMA staff are empowered and motivated to deliver the Key Directions of the Vision with union resources allocated in accordance with good governance.

Measures of success

- Staff identify with and practice NSWNMA values
- Support systems and tools will be in place to enable NSWNMA staff to meet the Vision and Key Directions
- Staff to be clear on their roles and the contribution required to achieve the Vision and Key Directions
- Staff to be actively engaged and committed to meeting the Vision
- Governance systems and practices support the delivery of our Vision