



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Nurses and midwives want NO GST ON HEALTH!

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has called on the Federal Government to rule out the possibility of extending the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to healthcare in Australia.

This morning members of the NSWNMA gathered outside the Tax Reform Summit, underway at the InterContinental Sydney, to urge Ministers, Premiers, business leaders, economists, financial advisors and other stakeholders to reject widening the GST base to incorporate healthcare.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said it was imperative the newly-elected Turnbull Government ensured that the country's health system remained excluded from the GST.

"Former Treasurer, Joe Hockey, and indeed our own NSW Premier, Mike Baird, are both on the public record championing for health to be captured in any future widening of the GST revenue generating base," Mr Holmes said.

"As a health union and as advocates for safe patient care for all, the NSWNMA is opposed outright to any moves which could compromise peoples' access to healthcare.

"Already, many health products and services are unaffordable to the most vulnerable in our society and we fear the imposition of an increased GST on health would push it beyond the reach of many."

NSWNMA Councillor and Central Coast registered nurse, Michelle Cashman, said all levels of government had to ensure Australia's health system remained affordable, accessible and universal.

"As health consumers, we already pay for the healthcare we receive, by paying the Medicare Levy on our income tax," Ms Cashman said.

"We also do so when we pay for goods such as medicines, crutches and the like, or for services like physiotherapy sessions. If the GST was extended to health, these goods and services would become unaffordable for many.

"Why punish the sick for being sick? That is certainly not the Australian way."

Nurses and midwives took the opportunity to highlight the benefits of introducing a small Robin Hood Tax (or Financial Transactions Tax) as a means of raising additional revenue for health. The NSWNMA has been advocating for a 0.05% levy on high-speed financial transactions conducted by big corporations, such as shares, derivatives, options and futures. If managed appropriately, a Robin Hood Tax could raise billions of dollars to help fund the continuation of Australia's world class health system.

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