



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

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## Band-aid approach to health budget frustrates nurses and midwives

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has conveyed disappointment at the Turnbull Government's lack of substantial forward planning for the health sector in the 2017-18 Federal Budget.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said it appeared the Coalition was too busy clawing back so-called 'zombie' policy measures of the past four years to tackle long term issues facing Australia's health care system.

"According to the federal government's own Future Health Workforce report we'll need an extra 123,000 nurses by 2030 to meet demand – yet the Coalition is going to slug nursing students \$1250 more for a four-year degree from July 1 next year and make them repay any HECS-HELP loans earlier," said Mr Holmes.

"Nurses and midwives have been lobbying for the resources necessary to deliver safe patient care across our public health system for many years with little reprieve.

"With our ageing population and an increase in patients with chronic medical conditions, extra pressure is being placed on our public hospital system – \$2.8 billion in hospital funding over the next four years will hardly be enough once it's divided amongst the states and territories and again there's no substantial investment into preventative health.

"We've also got a smoke and mirror approach by the Turnbull Government to establish a Medicare Guarantee Fund – a result of the Coalition's failed attempts to dismantle our universal health care scheme over the last four years.

"And instead of lifting the Medicare Rebate freeze entirely they're taking a gradual approach over three years, which will continue to impact patients who are accessing GPs and specialist services, including diagnostic imaging."

Given the current dire state of the aged care sector, Mr Holmes said it was imperative the Coalition also focused more attention towards addressing aged care staffing levels.

"The community must be assured the \$1.9 million allocated in the budget for an aged care workforce taskforce doesn't avoid the need for research-based nursing and personal care staffing ratios, which even Minister Wyatt admitted were necessary."

Mr Holmes said he was pleased the Turnbull Government had scrapped the planned cuts to paid parental leave, which would have seen hundreds of nurses and midwives in NSW lose up to \$11,500 under the government paid parental leave scheme.

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