



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

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New Maitland Hospital model not what it seems

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has concerns the new model for Maitland Hospital, announced by the NSW Minister for Health today, will not meet the needs of the community or the staff. This is still privatisation of a public health service.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said the community would still be losing its public hospital and the staff their entitlements.

"The not-for-profits were offered the same contract as the for-profits, so the model will be surplus driven. On top of that, after two years staff will lose their Public Health conditions of employment. The government is still abrogating its responsibility and dressing this up as something it's not," Mr Holmes said.

"This decision is just as bad as what we'd feared from a public-private partnership. There will no guarantees on staff to patient ratios after two years, once staff are forced to migrate to a new employment agreement.

"Contrary to what the government is claiming, this is not the same relationship NSW Health has with Newcastle's Calvary Mater or Sydney's St Vincent's Hospital. It is our understanding it will be the same contractual arrangements made with other public-private partnership proposals, such as the new Northern Beaches Hospital.

"For more than three and a half years we pursued information on the deal made between NSW Health and Healthscope at the Northern Beaches Hospital. The lack of transparency in these joint agreements are a major cause for concern.

"We'll meet with our members to discuss the issues and will be examining the fine print to find out what this means for staffing contracts and conditions.

"Maitland is first of five to forge ahead with a private partnership model. Goulburn, Wyong and Bowral will all remain in public hands. We call on the Health Minister to do the sensible thing and ensure Shellharbour Hospital remains public and reverse this decision to privatise the operation of the new Maitland Hospital.

"We know public-private partnerships in health don't work. They are ineffective in delivering quality health care and end up more expensive in the long-term."

The NSWNMA will continue to campaign all political parties until all five proposed public hospital privatisations in NSW are scrapped.

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