



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Cuts to nursing staff in Western NSW

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) fears patient safety will be compromised across several hospitals in the state's West, following widespread cuts to nursing staff shifts.

Over the past week, Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) has introduced new rosters for nursing staff based at Canowindra, Condobolin, Coonamble and Nyngan hospitals, citing the introduction of a new model of care for small hospitals and Multi Purpose Services.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said it was disingenuous of the health services to promote new models of care related to improved service delivery and efficiency, when the end result is to slash nursing staff shifts and compromising the delivery of safe patient care.

"This is the exact opposite of what nursing staff and the NSWNMA have been lobbying for over the past four years, which is, improved nurse to patient ratios right across the state's public hospital system, not just in our city hospitals," Mr Holmes said.

NSWNMA regional organiser, Darius Altman, said the affected nurses were devastated by WNSWLHD management's decision and have since voted to fight against staffing cutbacks.

"Our members at Canowindra, Coonamble and Condobolin hospitals are taking action against the nursing cuts and have resolved to stop carrying out any non-nursing duties such as cleaning, ordering supplies, emptying rubbish and linen skips, or administrative work. Instead they'll focus solely on providing patient care," Mr Altman said.

"The WNSWLHD has not taken into consideration the acuity of some patients and they are basing these new staffing levels on admission numbers only.

"Cutting back nursing hours is not the answer for Western NSW, especially when the state government has indicated it wants to improve the delivery of indigenous services across these areas.

"The nursing staff are concerned patients will suffer as a result of this decision, in particular the elderly residents who reside in these facilities," he said.

The NSWNMA supports the nurses' action and encouraged community members to get behind the nurses and voice their concerns, in writing, to both local state and federal members of parliament.

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