



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Renewed calls for government to prioritise public health and patient safety

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has reiterated its calls for the state government to appropriately fund over-stretched public health services and to implement much needed nurse-to-patient ratios across the state.

A report released today by the Australia Institute showed the state government had spent more than \$800 million dollars on minerals and fossil fuel industry assistance over a six year period, money which could have been directed to other priorities, such as hospitals or supported accommodation for people with a disability.

The report, *Mining the age of entitlement – state government assistance to the minerals and fossil fuel sector*, provided analysis of industry assistance contained within state budget papers from 2008-09 to 2013-14. It found NSW ranked third among states that gave the most financial support to the fossil fuel industry.

According to the report, the NSW government committed more funding to coal transportation assistance over the analysis period than it would cost to employ 653 nurses for six years.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said taxpayers were right to be concerned that the fossil fuel industry assistance consumed such a significant amount of money.

"We understand the significant role the mining industry plays in our state, but it should not be at the expense of providing other vital public services to our communities," Mr Holmes said.

"The report shows the government allocated more in its 2013-14 budget to assisting the minerals and fossil fuel industries than it did towards capital expenditure on supported accommodation for people with a disability.

"We've been calling on this government to implement mandated nurse-to-patient ratios across all public health facilities, particularly in emergency departments, country hospitals and specialty areas, such as neonatal intensive care units.

"It's time the state government got its priorities right. Spending \$872 million dollars of taxpayers' money over six years on industry assistance to the minerals and fossil fuel industry has not improved care available for our ageing population or put patient safety first in our public hospitals."

NB: Brett Holmes will be speaking at the launch of the Australian Institute report from 10:30am TODAY, at Hospital Road, behind NSW Parliament.

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