



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

General Secretary: Brett Holmes | Assistant General Secretary: Judith Kiejda

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Community campaign to keep new Northern Beaches Hospital public continues

Local nurses and midwives have taken their concerns surrounding the future of the new Northern Beaches Hospital at Frenchs Forest directly to the Member for Manly and Premier, Mike Baird.

Members from Manly and Mona Vale hospital branches of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) presented Premier Baird's electorate office with close to 700 postcards, representing up to 700 conversations with local residents who had expressed their opposition to the new hospital being privatised.

Assistant General Secretary of NSWNMA, Judith Kiejda, said while the NSW Government continued to hide behind commercial in-confidence excuses, members of the community wanted answers about the multi-million dollar project and the impacts it will have on the provision of public health services.

"For decades residents on Sydney's Northern Beaches have had access to public health services via the Manly and Mona Vale Hospitals, now the NSW Government wants to strip away that access by closing Manly, downgrading Mona Vale and signing a 20 year contract with a private operator," Ms Kiejda said.

"Despite repeated questions and concerns being raised, the government is ignoring the local community and the fact that public-private partnership models for public hospitals have had a history of failure in this country – Port Macquarie Base Hospital was a failure and cost taxpayers millions when the government had to buy it back.

"Our members are right to be concerned about the government's secrecy surrounding the new level five hospital, how the public-private services will operate, the future of nurse-to-patient ratios, as well as equal access to care.

"The NSW Ministry of Health has stopped consulting with us about the transfer arrangements and working conditions our local nurses and midwives can expect – leaving them in the dark until a successful tender is announced and all their contracts are signed on the dotted line.

"This is another example of this government's privatisation by stealth agenda. They are not concerned about putting patient safety first, their only objective is to destroy universal healthcare by introducing an Americanised two-tier health system where the public is forced to pay over and over again."

The branch members and representatives from local community groups said they were determined to continue discussing the issues with Northern Beaches residents and lobby the Premier to listen. The NSWNMA has also launched a dedicated TV and outdoor advertising campaign to raise public awareness.



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NB: The group of nurses, midwives and local community members will hold a picture opportunity outside Premier Baird's electorate office at 2 Wentworth Street, Manly from 4pm TODAY. Media are welcome to attend.

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