



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Keep it public, Premier Baird

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has commissioned a giant billboard to send a clear message to Manly MP and Premier, Mike Baird, to stop the privatisation of the new hospital planned for Sydney's Northern Beaches.

The 30-metre long billboard, located near the junction of Condamine Street and the Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation at Balgowlah, features 22 local nurses and midwives from both Manly and Mona Vale hospital branches of the NSWNMA.

Shot on location at Mona Vale beach, with Mona Vale hospital visible in the background, the advertisement reads: *Stop the privatisation of our Northern Beaches Hospital. Keepitpublic.org.au*

The NSWNMA has been coordinating a grassroots campaign with members and community representatives who are opposed to the privatisation of the new facility, currently earmarked for a 6.5 hectare site at Frenchs Forest.

Acting General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Judith Kiejda, said the billboard was deliberately chosen to help raise awareness that the State Government planned to hand over the new hospital to a private operator under a 20-year lease.

"The nurses and midwives featured in the billboard represent the hundreds of highly-skilled and dedicated health professionals who are concerned about the adverse impacts a privately-run hospital will have on the local community," Ms Kiejda said.

"For several months now our members have been talking to residents about the new Northern Beaches hospital and they've been surprised by the lack of detailed information available on the major project.

"We're hoping that hundreds of thousands of people will see the billboard, understand the risks of a private operator running their new hospital and support our campaign calling on the Premier to immediately stop the privatisation plan.

"Our members have long supported a new level 5 hospital on the Northern Beaches but they are vehemently opposed to the facility being operated by the for-profit sector – it will spell the end for public health services currently accessed in the local area."

Polling by ReachTEL in July found that over 76 per cent of Manly residents surveyed were concerned by the NSW Government's plan to privatise public hospitals and health services, while 66 per cent (aged 18-34 years) were worried about the new Northern Beaches hospital being run by a private operator.

More than 82 per cent of respondents in the same poll said they were pleased with the level of public health services currently provided locally.



Over 800 residents and business operators on the Northern Beaches have also signed postcards calling on Premier Baird to keep the new Northern Beaches hospital in public hands, to ensure everyone in the community has equal access to care.

*NB: The NSWNMA will officially launch the billboard onsite at **7:00am tomorrow, Tuesday 9 September**, with a group of the Manly and Mona Vale hospital branch members who feature in the advertisement.*

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