



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurses seek improved ratios for Muswellbrook

Members of Muswellbrook District Hospital Branch of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) will today step up their campaign for better staffing arrangements at Muswellbrook District Hospital.

Branch members will be out on the street and talking to members of the community about their concerns regarding safe staffing levels at the hospital.

In the public health system, staffing levels are currently calculated using a formula known as nursing hours per patient day (NHPPD). This is an estimation of the face-to-face care a patient can expect to receive while being treated in a hospital ward.

Regional hospitals such as Muswellbrook are allocated 5 NHPPD, which translates into a nurse-to-patient ratio of one nurse to every five patients (1:5) on day shifts. Meanwhile, larger metropolitan hospitals are allocated 6 NHPPD, this translates into a nurse-to-patient ratio of 1:4.

"This is unfair on Muswellbrook and the surrounding communities, who deserve equal hours of nursing care compared to those delivered in Sydney," said Assistant General Secretary, Judith Kiejda.

"We're asking locals to support our claim for six nursing hours per patient day, which has an equivalent ratio of one nurse to four patients, to be introduced at Muswellbrook District Hospital."

Local nurses and midwives are becoming increasingly concerned that patients can experience worse health outcomes as a result of their larger patient loads, compared to the care provided to their city counterparts. International research shows there is a seven per cent increase in the chance of mortality for every patient added to a nurse's workload, after common surgeries.

The branch members maintain that the disparity in staffing levels between regional and metropolitan hospitals is a health inequality and must be addressed by the incoming government.

Media Alert: NSWNMA members will be talking to community members along Bridge St (New England Highway), Muswellbrook, between 11am-2pm TODAY, Monday 23 March, 2015.

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