



# NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## Time to celebrate our hardworking nurses, past and present

Tens of thousands of dedicated registered nurses, enrolled nurses, assistants in nursing and student nurses will pause to celebrate what it means to be a nurse today and pay homage to the centenary of Gallipoli, including the many nurses who served during World War One.

At least 2139 Australian nurses served overseas between 1914 and 1919, while 423 worked in military hospitals in Australia. Sadly, 29 nurses died on active service.

General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, Brett Holmes, said International Nurses Day (12 May) was an important day to acknowledge all nurses' contributions to improved health care and the delivery of better health outcomes for patients.

"Being the centenary of Gallipoli, we thought it was fitting to reflect on the nurses who served during the war and worked tirelessly to support the wounded, not only on hospital ships and Lemnos Island near Gallipoli but also on the many fronts where fighting occurred during WWI," Mr Holmes said.

"Today is an opportunity to celebrate the huge improvements in nursing and the positive impact nurses have in our community.

"As the largest workforce of health professionals, nurses play a vital role in maintaining the health of our population and often go beyond the call of duty to deliver the highest levels of patient care."

International Nurses Day is recognised worldwide on the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing who fought to improve both civilian and army health care.

Throughout the day, nurses at hundreds of hospitals and health facilities across NSW will hold special breakfasts, morning teas, BBQ lunches and afternoon teas with colleagues and community members.

"Nurses have a professional obligation to advocate strongly for their patients but we also encourage them to stand up for their own rights, as good workplaces provide safer environments for patients as well," Mr Holmes said.

"We will continue fighting for improvements in health care, such as safe nurse-to-patient staffing ratios across all of our public hospitals.

"Our state's health, aged care and disability systems all rely on the professionalism of nurses, their contribution to the wellbeing of our society is invaluable.

"It's not surprising that nursing was recently rated the most ethical and honest profession for the 21<sup>st</sup> year in a row in the annual Roy Morgan survey.

"Nurses really are a force for change and we will be watching closely to see if there are any measures in tonight's federal Budget which could impede upon the hard work that nurses do.



“Our members are passionate about the continuation of universal health care, as a fundamental right for all Australians and they want to see a fair and just society that cares for the vulnerable, the sick and the elderly,” he said.

*NB: Further details of individual branch International Nurses Day activities, being held across NSW, are available from the NSWNMA on request.*

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