



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Abbott diagnoses poor health outcomes for NSW

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has criticised the Abbott Government for failing to recognise the adverse impact further cuts to health funding in the 2015-16 Budget will have on public health outcomes and the broader health workforce.

Following devastating cuts to state health funding in the 2014-15 federal Budget, General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said last night's budget was another nail in the coffin for public health.

"Given the attacks on health funding and on the universality of Medicare last year, it's clear this government is intent on further privatisation and the Americanisation of our health system," Mr Holmes said.

"The government is sticking with the \$1.2 billion in health funding it took from NSW last year and clawing away more money from preventative health measures that would otherwise help to curb future cost blowouts in public health.

"By ripping billions of dollars out of the public health system, they will reduce it to a safety net and make people think that private health cover and private hospitals are the only solutions for healthcare.

"This strategy will only increase our overall health costs and hit the hip pocket of those who can least afford it – this is the opposite of delivering an affordable, sustainable Medicare system."

Mr Holmes said the Abbott Government's backflip on delivering an equitable paid parental leave scheme and slashing of the existing government scheme was a massive blow for mothers, particularly female nurses on the minimum wage.

"We estimate hundreds of nurses and midwives in NSW could lose access to more than \$11,500 available under the current federal scheme, if the government's so called 'double-dipping' measure is passed," Mr Holmes said.

"Currently, registered nurses in the NSW public health system are entitled to 14 weeks paid maternity and can access an additional 18 weeks from the federal parental leave scheme, ensuring they're able to remain at home during the most critical time of their baby's life."

Classification	Current Govt PPL (18 weeks, \$640.90 p/w)	Employer Mat Leave Provision (weeks)	Weekly pay (Full-time)	Current Employer Mat Leave (\$)	Current Total Employee Benefit (\$)	Proposed Fed Gov contribution (\$)	Proposed Total Employee Benefit (\$)
RN Y1 - Public Sector	\$11,536.20	14	\$1,087.10	\$15,219.40	\$26,755.60	\$0.00	\$15,219.40
RN Y5 - Public Sector	\$11,536.20	14	\$1,331.90	\$18,646.60	\$30,182.80	\$0.00	\$18,646.60
RN TA - Public Sector	\$11,536.20	14	\$1,526.60	\$21,372.40	\$32,908.60	\$0.00	\$21,372.40



“However, some aged care and many private hospital employers don’t offer any paid maternity leave at all, prompting nurses in these sectors to rely entirely on the government scheme,” he said.

“Supporting a newborn on the minimum wage is a cruel proposition to be putting on the table.

“The minimum wage is a long way from the average wage and this budget measure is a complete contradiction of the Productivity Commission’s advice regarding the wellbeing of mothers and newborns during their first twelve months.

“Forcing mothers back to work too early is indicative of just how out of touch our Prime Minister and Treasurer are with reality.”

Mr Holmes said the NSWNMA would continue to lobby federal MPs and Senators on the benefits of introducing a modest financial transactions tax (FTT) to generate additional revenue for the delivery of essential public services, including health.

“Billions of dollars could be generated off the back of a small levy on the trading of financial instruments such as shares, bonds and futures, and could be implemented in a way that would shield everyday Australians from impacts,” said Mr Holmes.

“A financial transactions tax would help fund a viable and effective public health sector and is a credible option the government should consider, given we know the demand on health services will continue to rise into the future.”

The NSWNMA also called on Premier Mike Baird take the fight to the Abbott Government and ensure that on 1 July 2017 the state’s health system doesn’t fall over a cliff.

Mr Holmes said NSW public hospital funding was at serious risk, as a result of the Abbott Government’s decision to renege on payment of services provided and instead index contributions against the Consumer Price Index and population growth.

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