



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tamworth nurses & midwives won't relocate until patient safety improves

Plans for the emergency department and maternity services to transfer into new facilities at the Tamworth Rural Referral Hospital site could be delayed next week.

Tamworth Branch of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has again informed Hunter New England Local Health District (HNE LHD) management that emergency department staff and midwives will not be relocating due to serious patient safety concerns.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, confirmed that Branch members had today passed a new resolution not to move, after HNE LHD management failed to address the current staffing capacity on the night duty shift or the Branch's request for an additional nurse for 10 hours.

"The Branch maintains it is unsafe for one nurse to cover both the resuscitation and triage roles in the emergency department during the night duty shift, given Tamworth is a major rural referral hospital," said Mr Holmes.

"Management has also refused the Branch's request for an additional nurse for 10 hours during the night duty shift, seven days a week, which would have helped to ameliorate this issue.

"As a result, the Branch has confirmed emergency department nursing staff will not move into the new facilities next Wednesday as currently planned by HNE LHD management."

In addition, the Branch has reiterated its concerns regarding staffing and isolation issues within the hospital's maternity services, particularly during night duty and meal breaks.

Despite raising the issues repeatedly, HNE LHD management has also failed to implement any improvements ahead of the planned relocation of maternity services on Monday, 20 July.

Mr Holmes said the Branch passed a second resolution today, informing HNE LHD management that midwives could only transition safely to the new maternity unit if temporary modifications were introduced, pending proper staffing levels.

"As a result of insufficient staff to cover both the new birthing and postnatal units, our members are calling for a safer option of birthing to occur in a dedicated section of the new postnatal unit. This would ensure adequate numbers of staff to care for both birthing women and women receiving post-natal care," Mr Holmes said.

Mr Holmes reiterated that HNE LHD management had been aware of the Branch's workload concerns within the emergency department and maternity services for a long period of time and had failed to bring staffing levels back in line with Award requirements.

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