



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Goulburn nurses forced to close beds over unsafe staffing

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has confirmed that a number of beds could begin to close within days in Chisholm Ross Mental Health Unit at Goulburn, as a result of critical nursing staff shortages at the facility.

Following a meeting on Wednesday (19 August), members of Chisholm Ross Branch of the NSWNMA passed a resolution to take action, after management failed to address the 15 full-time equivalent vacancies on the nursing staff roster.

Assistant General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Judith Kiejda, said the Branch informed management that the situation had reached a crisis point after months of inaction and the facility was no longer considered to be staffed safely.

"For the safety of the Goulburn community and the surrounding areas, our members have urged management to address these ongoing staffing shortages as a matter of urgency," Ms Kiejda said.

"If management fails to act this week, our members will begin closing beds to ensure the nursing staff levels match the number of patients in Chisholm Ross, allowing these nurses to meet their professional obligations for safe patient care.

"That means the sub-acute unit at Chisholm Ross would be reduced from the current 23 beds down to 18 beds, while the High Dependency Unit would reduce from nine to six beds.

"This is not an action our members take lightly. However, management has repeatedly failed to adhere to the nurse-to-patient ratio legal requirements that are stipulated in the state Award, using Nursing Hours Per Patient Day."

Ms Kiejda said the Branch had moved to reassure the local community that the safety of patients remained their top priority.

"As per normal practice, the members will continue to monitor the situation at Chisholm Ross Mental Health Unit and will continue to deliver high-level patient care to those in the facility."

Chisholm Ross Branch of the NSWNMA has given management 48 hours notice to respond and begin addressing the nursing staff shortages before any beds are closed throughout the facility.

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