



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

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## Nurses ask: Ice – where to from here?

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) will tomorrow host an education forum for mental health and drug and alcohol nurses to discuss the prevalence of methamphetamine or 'ice' in NSW.

The 'Ice – where to from here?' forum will hear from a range of speakers who will discuss current prevention and rehabilitation programs, impacts of perinatal and parental drug use, trends and available treatments, as well as important skills to safely respond and treat ice-affected patients.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said the education forum was an important opportunity for nurses working in the drug and alcohol and mental health sectors to be informed about the issue of ice and to discuss experiences with nursing colleagues.

"There's no question that ice remains a significant threat to not only individuals who use it but also to their families and local communities," Mr Holmes said.

"The Federal Government was quick to label the issue of ice as an epidemic, roll out a National Ice Taskforce and launch graphic TV advertisements as part of its strategy to highlight the problem.

"Our State Government also announced a package of measures to address ice use in the community, following consultations with health professionals and local police.

"However, many experts and people working in mental health and drug and alcohol prevention are calling for a more research-based approach, including raising public awareness about available treatments as well as the importance of illicit drug use prevention.

"We need our federal and state politicians to be focusing on ensuring appropriate funding for mental health and drug and alcohol services to help improve referral and treatment services – not taking that money away or redirecting it elsewhere."

Recent data shows the population using methamphetamines has remained reasonably stable, but there is a trend to suggest users are obtaining more pure and potent forms of the drug.

Meanwhile, methamphetamine-related admissions to hospitals throughout NSW have risen from 1269 in 2009-10 to 3,135 in 2013-14.

***MEDIA ALERT: Four independent speakers will address the NSWNMA forum from 9.00am – 1.00pm, TOMORROW, Friday 11 September 2015 at the NSWNMA, 50 O'Dea Avenue, Waterloo NSW 2017. The morning session will be open for media to attend. A professional development session during the afternoon will be a closed event.***

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