



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Nurses demand answers to tackle violence and boost patient safety

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) welcomed today's first roundtable to discuss serious violent incidents and aggression occurring in public hospitals throughout the state.

The NSWNMA, together with the Health Services Union (HSU), Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation (ASMOF) and Australian Medical Association of NSW (AMA), met with officials from the Ministry of Health in North Sydney to highlight their concerns and put forward options.

Despite arranging the roundtable of health sector stakeholders, NSW Minister for Health Jillian Skinner did not attend today's meeting however, Acting General Secretary of the NSWNMA Judith Kiejda said she was confident the Minister would be fully briefed on all the issues raised.

"There was general consensus from everyone that the prevalence of violent and aggressive incidents occurring in the state's public hospitals needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency," Ms Kiejda said.

"Today was productive and we are hopeful the Minister will consider the full range of proposals and new protocols put forward by the health sector.

"Given the escalating nature of these incidents and the fact they are occurring in both metropolitan and regional hospital settings, as well as beyond emergency departments, we are all of the view that appropriately trained security staff are paramount.

"We discussed the need for improved training of all hospital staff, including nurses and midwives, who may be required to intervene when critical situations arise and for that training to be consistent across the state.

"There were lengthy talks about the need for consistent approaches to managing and caring for substance-fuelled patients who present to our hospitals for treatment, be that illicit drugs or alcohol.

"We outlined the need for clinical assessments of substance-fuelled patients to ensure the correct escalation plans can be enacted for the safety of the patients themselves, hospital staff and other bystanders.

"We also acknowledged that our society is rapidly changing and improved ways of interacting with police and law enforcement agencies is required in all areas, including rural and remote NSW.

"Overall, the NSWNMA is optimistic about improved protocols and procedures discussed during today's roundtable.

"We look forward to a timely response from the Minister, as well as a strong commitment that changes will occur to improve the safety of patients, nurses, midwives and other hospital staff."



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