



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

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28 August, 2016

Fears of understaffing at Lismore Base Hospital

Nurses have raised concerns about overnight staffing at the redeveloped Lismore Base Hospital Emergency Department after being advised of the staffing structure just days out from the official opening.

The new unit is almost twice the size with an additional six beds in the acute section and four more beds in the short stay unit. NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) Lismore Base Hospital branch members are seeking consideration for an additional 12 hour shift, seven nights a week for a trial period to ensure patients can be safely cared for.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said understaffing at new hospitals was a common theme across the state.

"The chronic staffing issues we experienced shortly after Wagga Wagga, Tamworth, Dubbo and Byron Bay prove that more planning needs to be done prior to ensure patient safety is not compromised. It's common sense that an increased footprint should require additional staff," Mr Holmes said.

"Add to that an average 10 to 15 per cent increase in demand at new facilities and you're walking into a disaster by staffing according to the old facility."

Lismore Base Hospital branch members held an extraordinary branch meeting late Friday where they resolved to appeal for the additional overnight shift. A written response has been requested from management by close of business on Monday, 29 August. If the request is declined then the branch will reconvene to consider its options before moving to the new ED on Thursday.

"It's always challenging to adapt to a new working environment. We hope management will make the right decision to avoid another situation of inadequate staffing that has the potential to affect staff and patient safety," Mr Holmes said.

The NSWNMA will continue to assist the Lismore Base Hospital branch to achieve a safe level of staffing.

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