



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

General Secretary: Brett Holmes | Assistant General Secretary: Judith Kiejda
P (02) 8595 1234 f www.facebook.com/nswnma t twitter.com/nswnma

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Community support builds in Gunnedah for nurse to patient ratios

A passionate group of local nurses and residents will take to the streets tomorrow (Thursday), as part of a campaign for improved patient safety at Gunnedah District Hospital.

In recent weeks, members of Gunnedah District Hospital Branch of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) have been calling on the state government to deliver nurse to patient ratios to the hospital.

Acting local branch secretary, Heather Franke, said nurse to patient ratios were vital to ensure the delivery of safe patient care, as well as better health outcomes.

"In 2011, the Nurses and Midwives' Association managed to secure ratios within our state Award for medical, surgical and other speciality wards within metropolitan hospitals and some regional sites – but we missed out completely," Ms Franke said.

"For past six years the NSWNMA has been lobbying the Ministry of Health to classify Gunnedah District Hospital in order to qualify for minimum, mandated nurse to patient ratios, with no luck.

"We've been talking to the community about this issue and now we're expanding our efforts to make sure the entire Gunnedah population is aware of the situation.

"It's not good enough that our community misses out – patients in Gunnedah deserve to receive the same level of care that is provided to patients in the big city hospitals.

"It's not an unreasonable request in our view, we're simply asking for a minimum which guarantees patient safety."

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said despite multiple attempts to achieve nurse to patient ratios for Gunnedah, their pleas had continuously been knocked back.

"Year after year we've gone to the Ministry of Health seeking to improve ratios through increased nursing hours per patient but we've been turned away," Mr Holmes said.

"As recently as last week, the Ministry confirmed that the status quo would remain at Gunnedah and circumstances had not changed enough at the hospital to warrant introducing nurse to patient ratios."

Mr Holmes said the NSWNMA fully supported the local Branch in taking their concerns to the community and raising awareness amongst business operators to help lobby for ratios to be implemented.

Media Alert: NSWNMA Gunnedah District Hospital Branch members and residents will walk from the town cenotaph at 10:30am TOMORROW (Thursday 4 May 2017), down Conadilly Street to Wolsley Park, where they will discuss the need for nurse to patient ratios. Media is welcome to attend.



MEDIA CONTACTS:

Brett Holmes, General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 550 324

Judith Kiejda, Assistant General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 674 119

Danielle Mahoney, Media Advisor, NSWNMA 0459 880 178