



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hospital upgrades promised while calls for better staffing ignored

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has expressed disappointment in the NSW Government for failing to expand nurse-to-patient ratios in today's state budget.

Acting General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Judith Kiejda, said with a \$4.5 billion budget surplus, the NSW Government was being irresponsible for not addressing workload issues currently plaguing public hospitals.

"When is this government going to listen to the frontline nurses and midwives in our public hospitals and provide them with the support they need to do their daily jobs – to safely care for the sick, injured, elderly and to deliver our precious newborns?" Ms Kiejda questioned.

"Of course we welcome the overall 4.8 per cent increase in health funding allocated in today's budget however, it ignores the long-term planning necessary to address growing demand on health services and the safe staffing levels that are required," said Ms Kiejda.

"The government must invest in additional staffing now to tackle projected population growth and the increased pressure this will put on public health services into the future.

"There's also growing concerns throughout our hospitals about inadequate support for junior staff who are trying to enhance their skills on the job.

"Today's funding for increased emergency department attendances is welcome but the harsh reality is unless this government implements a minimum nurse-to-patient ratio, such as 1:3 in emergency departments, nurses in these departments will continue to be run off their feet, stressed and burnt out.

"The research is in: ratios save lives, deliver better health outcomes and make good economic sense.

"The best way for this government to make a difference to the lives of NSW citizens is by ensuring they can be treated promptly and safely by nursing staff when they present to an emergency department. Introducing ratios will help to achieve this.

"An extra 55 specialist nurses and midwives across the state is great, but when that figure is divided among 15 Local Health Districts it just doesn't go far enough."

Ms Kiejda said the additional funding for mental health services and community based services was welcome, along with dedicated funding for palliative care services and specialised palliative nurses.

Ms Kiejda said it was also imperative the state government was more open and transparent with the communities of Bowral, Maitland, Shellharbour and Wyong regarding its intentions for their public hospitals.

"Bowral, Maitland and Shellharbour Hospitals all received \$5 million in additional redevelopment funds – Wyong has been allocated \$10 million – yet a proposed public-private partnership model for each of these sites remains a possibility," Ms Kiejda said.



“The people of Bowral, Maitland, Shellharbour, Wyong and all of their surrounding areas deserve to know if they will continue to have access to a publicly run hospital.”

The NSWNMA has confirmed it will continue to campaign for improved and expanded nurse to patient ratios throughout the state’s public hospital system.

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