



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

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Shellharbour celebrates keeping its PUBLIC hospital!

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) members in Shellharbour and Port Kembla are celebrating this afternoon, following confirmation the new Shellharbour Hospital will remain a publicly operated health service.

During an urgent staff meeting called by Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, nurses, midwives, doctors and allied health staff were told the \$251 million redevelopment of Shellharbour Hospital would now proceed, as originally planned, under a traditional publicly-funded model.

General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Brett Holmes, said more than 13 months of tireless campaigning by local health workers, community members and public health advocates had paid off and was a victory for the people of Shellharbour and Port Kembla.

"Today's announcement, confirmed by Health Minister Brad Hazzard, is testament to the Shellharbour community standing together to ensure the hospital redevelopment remains a fully publicly built and operated facility," Mr Holmes said.

"This is without a doubt a victory for the people and I am thrilled the right decision has been made.

"Our members have been living with this uncertainty for more than a year, which put their job security under a cloud, not to mention fears over the lack of guaranteed safe patient care and accountability under a public-privatised model.

"We stand by the evidence that indicates public-private partnerships in the health sector don't work."

Nadia Rodriguez from the NSWNMA Shellharbour Hospital Branch said she was absolutely ecstatic with the announcement.

"I was sitting on the floor during the staff meeting and I literally jumped up and down," said Ms Rodriguez.

"Everyone cheered when we heard the news. I think we were all in shock and couldn't believe what we were hearing. There's been a lot of scepticism and uncertainty floating around in recent weeks.

"But people power! We all fought together and this is the outcome, it is just brilliant. We are so pleased!"

Mr Holmes called on the Health Minister to immediately extend the same courtesy to the people of the Lower Hunter and to scrap this government's plan to sell off the new Maitland Hospital at Metford to a not-for-profit provider.

The NSWNMA reiterated it would continue to campaign all political parties until all proposed public hospital privatisations in NSW were overturned.

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