



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Remarkable midwives being pushed to the brink

On a day when thousands of midwives, clinical midwifery educators, midwifery consultants, managers and students should all be celebrating the joys of their profession, many are instead considering their futures away from the sector.

General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, Brett Holmes, said the growing demand being placed on midwifery staff across the state was of serious concern.

"Today, as we celebrate the vital role midwives play in providing support, care and advice to mothers bringing new life into the world on every shift, the stark reality is, in NSW our highly skilled and dedicated midwives are being pushed to the brink," Mr Holmes said.

"In both public and private hospital settings, experienced midwives are working under increased pressure and often there's simply no longer enough time for them to provide the level of support and education that mums need, during those vital first few days with their newborns.

"We know breastfeeding rates in NSW have continued to decline year on year and there's also a concerted effort by hospital executives to reduce many mother's postnatal lengths of stay.

"More and more midwives are opting to work part-time or as a casual, just to avoid the intense amounts of pressure their full-time equivalent colleagues are regularly confronted with, such as filling the void when short-term vacancies arise like sick leave or unexpected leave," he said.

Renella Fairley, a Clinical Midwifery Specialist in Sydney's west, said the current staffing crisis, population boom, and lack of resources and equipment had made it even more difficult to deliver the safe, quality care women and their families deserve.

"Although we love what we do, the heavy workloads mean increased burnout for midwives and they're leaving the profession in droves," said Ms Fairley.

"The birth journey is one that has a lasting impact on everyone involved and should be one of the most precious, memorable times in a family's lives.

"It should be a positive experience, with positive outcomes in any given situation and one that needs to be nurtured and respected."

Mr Holmes wished all midwives a happy **International Midwives' Day** and said the NSWNMA would continue to campaign for improved maternity staffing across NSW and for minimum midwife-to-mother ratios to be introduced into the public health system urgently.

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