



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

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John Hunter Hospital ED nurses win extra staffing

Emergency department nurses at Newcastle's John Hunter Hospital have negotiated five additional full-time equivalent positions for resuscitation and triage, after threatening to take industrial action over ongoing staffing issues at the major regional referral hospital.

Members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) John Hunter Hospital branch worked with nursing management to gain more support for resuscitation and triage nurses in the emergency department, following a jump in presentations and acuity.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said expecting one triage nurse to care for up to 45 patients, from midnight until 7am, in the waiting room and ambulance bay beds was inadequate and clearly dangerous.

"Prior to this staffing win, the ED had three resuscitation beds but only two nurses dedicated to those beds after midnight. Any cardiac arrest requires a minimum of three nurses to support the medical team in a resuscitation, so anyone can do the math and realise sooner or later someone draws the short straw," said Mr Holmes.

"It's disappointing negotiations with Hunter New England Local Health District dragged on to the point where the only way to guarantee the safety of patients was for our members to consider closing beds.

"For months, branch members continued to highlight the significant problems of understaffing in triage and resuscitation, with no additional nursing staff appointed to manage the increase in presentations or changes to patient transfers throughout the hospital.

"The five extra full-time equivalent nursing positions the local branch has now secured is very welcome and testament to the hardworking nursing staff who had the courage to speak up and exercise their industrial rights until the issues were resolved."

NSWNMA John Hunter Hospital branch said they will continue working with senior nursing managers to monitor the situation in the emergency department as the new resuscitation and triage nursing positions are recruited.

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