



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

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## Tenterfield nurses challenge hospital understaffing

Members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) are joining forces with community members to raise concerns about safe patient care at Tenterfield Hospital, following a 33% reduction in local nursing staff.

NSWNMA Acting General Secretary, Judith Kiejda, said a petition calling on the Chief Executive of Hunter New England Local Health District to urgently intervene and address community concerns was being circulated.

"Covertly cutting frontline nursing staff in a small country hospital is completely at odds with what the Berejiklian government promised constituents at the March state election," said Ms Kiejda.

"More nurses and midwives for regional NSW' is what the Health Minister committed for the bush, not less.

"It's completely unacceptable for Hunter New England LHD to reduce the number of rostered nurses back to just two on each of the day shifts at Tenterfield Hospital, without any consultation or risk assessment for the remaining staff.

"With the hospital's new emergency department due to become operational mid next month, we are calling on the LHD's Chief Executive and the Health Minister to immediately increase the daily staff levels to a minimum of three nurses on each shift.

"This is not an unreasonable request to maintain safe care for patients utilising this vital local health service.

"The LHD has a duty of care to ensure the hospital is safely and appropriately staffed at all times. Unless a modest increase in nursing staff occurs quickly, nurses will be forced to work in isolation, with no capacity for relief or assistance if two nurses are required for a medical procedure.

"The Tenterfield and surrounding community deserves safe, quality clinical care at all times and should not be expected to suffer with less."

The NSWNMA is supporting members employed at Tenterfield Hospital and has sought urgent meetings with representatives from Hunter New England LHD to discuss the issues.

The petition will be available throughout local businesses and community groups.

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