



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

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## Hospital changes cut jobs, spark patient safety fears

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has expressed deep concern to Northern NSW Local Health District over a plan to merge two inpatient wards at Maclean District Hospital, effectively creating a ghost ward and cutting two positions.

Alarmed by a lack of detail provided to local staff and residents, members of the NSWNMA Clarence Valley branch met yesterday with Local Health District representatives to highlight the widespread fears of nursing staff.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said the rationale for the Local Health District's proposed changes remained unclear, along with any preparedness to mitigate impacts on other areas of the hospital.

"Our members received no warning about the proposal and were asked to respond within two weeks. We still have many unanswered questions about this plan," said Mr Holmes.

"It's completely disingenuous of the Local Health District to announce these changes under the guise of 'efficient management', yet claim total bed numbers and overall health service delivery at Maclean will remain the same.

"Both the acute and sub-acute inpatient wards were due to receive increased rostered nursing hours, funded by the NSW Health Minister's 2019 election commitment to boost nursing positions in regional public hospitals.

"The fact the Local Health District is deleting two current positions from the acute ward, including a Nurse Unit Manager role, and plans to recruit less qualified enrolled nurses and assistants in nursing, raises further questions about ensuring a safe skills mix among the nurses on each shift."

Mr Holmes said the Local Health District had shown further contempt for the Maclean community by rejecting an invitation to address a public forum arranged by NSWNMA branch members on Thursday (27 February) at the Jim Thompson Pavillion from 6pm, then subsequently announcing its own community information session for the day prior.

The NSWNMA said it would continue to participate in consultation meetings with the Local Health District to ensure safe patient care and adequate staffing was prioritised at Maclean District Hospital.

The NSWNMA also confirmed the hospital's emergency department was not expected to experience nurse staffing cuts as a result of the Local Health District's recent review of ED staffing profiles at Maclean, Murwillumbah, Ballina and Byron Central hospitals.

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