



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

General Secretary: Brett Holmes | Assistant General Secretary: Judith Kiejda
P (02) 8595 1234 | www.facebook.com/nswnma | twitter.com/nswnma

11 May, 2020

Nurses fighting COVID-19 left out in cold by wage freeze

On the eve of International Nurses' Day, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has attacked plans by the NSW Government to ram through legislation for a public sector wage freeze, as early as tomorrow when parliament resumes for special sessions.

The NSWNMA, together with public sector unions representing all workers keeping NSW safe during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, has called on state opposition and crossbench politicians to vigorously reject any wage freeze proposals.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, slammed NSW Treasurer Dominic Perrottet for hypocritically claiming to "always put people before numbers", then deny workers on the COVID-19 frontline, including nurses and midwives, a modest wage increase from 1 July.

"The government cannot deny the sacrifices of frontline workers, especially when more than half of the 144 NSW Health workers who have contracted COVID-19, acquired it while at work," said Mr Holmes.

"Thousands of nurses, midwives, other health sector workers and public servants are risking their lives daily to keep fellow citizens safe. These workers deserve recognition, not attempts by government to send wages backwards and our economy into further turmoil.

"We are all preparing for a second wave of COVID-19, yet the government is asking nurses and midwives to do more for less, putting the budget bottom line before people in need.

"The Treasurer wants to ignore the efforts of frontline workers and unions operating in good faith, by planning a wage freeze for all public sector workers. It's a disgrace.

"Nurses have been spat on and abused, forced to deal with a lack of Personal Protective Equipment and put themselves, and their families, at risk each shift.

"As restrictions continue to ease, our community is eager to return to some form of normality, but frontline workers won't get to share that privilege and are now expected to sacrifice even more financially.

"Some of our members have witnessed a partner become unemployed or have had their shifts reduced. With partners ineligible for welfare, many frontline workers rely on a modest pay increase to help meet rising cost of living pressures.

"The middle of a pandemic is hardly the time to be asking frontline nurses and midwives to suck it up, show up for their shifts and do even more for less.

"Taking the steps to legislate this wage freeze ahead of International Nurses' Day (12 May) is also a horrible reflection of what our government really thinks of nurses, midwives and other public sector workers."

The NSWNMA has begun lobbying Opposition and Crossbench MPs to reject the government's public sector wage freeze.

MEDIA CONTACTS:



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION
MEDIA RELEASE

Brett Holmes, General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 550 324

Gia Hayne, Media Advisor, NSWNMA 0488 015 317