



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurses and midwives insulted by cruel wage freeze

Tens of thousands of nurses and midwives have been dealt a blow in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, after the NSW Government today confirmed it will freeze all public sector wages.

In response, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has rejected assertions by Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Treasurer Dominic Perrottet that frontline health workers have not sacrificed enough already.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said the government was disingenuous to suggest it was "deeply grateful" for the efforts of nurses and midwives, then refuse a modest 2.5% pay increase.

"Month after month, nurses and midwives have showed up for their shifts, helped tackle the worst pandemic our health system has ever seen and kept our community safe," said Mr Holmes.

"Our members have stood at the bedside for hours on end, caring for patients, sweating under layers of personal protective equipment – at times wearing substandard equipment – because of their commitment to saving lives. Yet the government's response is to freeze their wages.

"Nurses and midwives have been spat on, abused and discriminated against throughout this pandemic. Despite this, they have showed up for their shifts, unclear what each day would bring, now they're being told they must do more for less.

"To suggest nurses, midwives and other public sector workers have not sacrificed enormously over the past four months is quite frankly, insulting. They have worked their guts out.

"The Premier and Treasurer are ignoring how a public sector wage freeze will impact rural and regional NSW. These communities rely on nurses and midwives to spend their wages in local businesses.

"After suffering through drought, bushfires and now COVID-19, it beggars belief the government wants to make it even harder for these communities to recover."

Members across the state have begun voicing their opposition to the wage freeze publicly.

The NSWNMA is considering all options and continuing discussions with the Opposition and Crossbench MPs to block the government's public sector wage freeze.

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