



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

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## Rural health boost needed across NSW

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has backed calls for a public inquiry into the inequities of rural and regional health services and urged the Berejiklian Government to fast-track the allocation of extra nurses and midwives across the state.

Following revelations of adverse patient outcomes on Nine's *60 Minutes* overnight, NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said systemic issues, including poor staffing and skills mix, had to change.

"On behalf of our members, we are certainly open to the NSW Opposition's proposal for a public inquiry into rural and regional health in NSW," said Mr Holmes.

"There are plenty of short staffing concerns in these health settings, as well as the myriad of pressures nurses and midwives face as they try to deliver the best acute care in our regional hospitals.

"For years, we've been calling for increased nurse-to-patient ratios across all public hospitals in NSW to improve safety and promote better patient outcomes, but the government continues to refuse to commit to mandatory minimum staffing.

"For too long, the government has ignored the evidence that nurse-to-patient ratios do save lives.

"The government must also prioritise the roll-out of additional nurses and midwives it promised, instead of waiting until weeks out from the next state election in 2023.

"Access to adequate healthcare services is a basic right and should not be compromised year after year to save budget bottom lines.

"Our regional communities have faced ongoing battles with drought, severe water shortages, catastrophic bushfires and now further economic downturn thanks to COVID-19. They deserve access to the best health care possible, regardless of where they choose to live.

"The government has also neglected to adequately increase the number of Clinical Nurse Educators available to better mentor junior nursing staff throughout regional areas.

"The government must stop relying on the goodwill of nurses and midwives to carry our underfunded and understaffed public health system through, while maintaining a commitment to their own professional obligations. Enough is enough.

"The government must stop abrogating from its duty of care to patients in our public hospitals and support the health staff trying to deliver safe and adequate care."

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