



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Top gong for rapid response to COVID-19 risks

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has been recognised for its agile response in supporting its nursing and midwifery members at work on the COVID-19 frontline across NSW.

During today's [2020 SafeWork NSW Awards](#), the NSWNMA received the top union award for 'Outstanding work health and safety support to members in the changed working environment due to COVID-19'.

Humbled by the accolade, NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said it was recognition of the determination by everyone involved to ensure NSWNMA members across the public, private and aged care sectors were kept up to date as the COVID-19 situation evolved rapidly.

"When the biggest global health pandemic in 100 years is hurtling towards you, you have a duty to your members to ensure they have exactly what they need to be safe in the workplace, but to also maintain the safe care of their patients and residents," said Mr Holmes.

"We recognised early that access to personal protective equipment (PPE) was a big problem, not just in the public hospital system, but also in the private sector and aged care, so we were quick to open channels of communication and get issues resolved as promptly as possible.

"The issue of fit-testing P2 and N95 masks worn by our members was another major concern and we've achieved improvement, with almost all Local Health Districts committing to fit-testing programs in their public hospitals. The increased fit-testing of clinical staff will go beyond COVID-19, improving respiratory protection for nurses long after the virus disappears," Mr Holmes concluded.

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Judith Kiejda, said the award was testament to the union's commitment to prioritise member's issues and secure outcomes, so nurses and midwives can continue their selfless work.

"Access to leave was another issue we were determined to tackle quickly. We wanted to ensure the health and wellbeing of our members was properly considered, given the unknown territory they were working in responding to COVID-19," said Ms Kiejda.

"Thousands of nurses and midwives were forced to respond rapidly and absorb new workplace policies at short notice. They could not escape it. They have lived, breathed, and continue to work through the pandemic response today.

"We dedicate this award to all the hardworking nurses and midwives of NSW."

The SafeWork NSW Awards in 2020 recognise excellence and innovation in work health and safety response to COVID-19 across a broad range of industries. #SafeWorkAwards

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