



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nurses and midwives strike over staffing at seven sites

Hundreds of nurses and midwives across six hospitals and a mental health centre took industrial action today, voting to stop work or close beds.

Members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) expressed their frustration at the NSW government's refusal to improve staffing by implementing shift-by-shift ratios.

Stop work actions are currently underway at Belmont Hospital (24 hours) and the Mental Health Centre at Waratah (24 hours) in the Hunter, as well as Shoalhaven Hospital (4 hours) on the south coast.

Nurses and midwives at Bowral Hospital in the Southern Highlands walked off the job for two hours. Blue Mountains District Hospital stopped work for one hour and closed beds to match available staffing levels, as did Springwood Hospital.

NSWNMA members voted to close five ambulance bay beds for four hours at John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle from 3pm.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said branches didn't take the decision for industrial action lightly and all hospitals remain open to the public, with life-preserving staffing levels.

"Our members are exhausted and tired of feeling taken for granted," said Mr Holmes.

"This past year has exacerbated ongoing staffing issues and taken a heavy toll on many nurses and midwives.

"Today's actions indicate just how fed up nurses and midwives are with the current staffing shortfalls. They are constantly dealing with excessive overtime and unreasonable workloads.

"Many fear patient safety is regularly being compromised due to chronic understaffing. There's less time for clinical guidance and vacancies are left unfilled for too long.

"The NSW government knows we've got a staffing crisis in our hospitals and is putting lives at risk by neglecting to adopt shift-by-shift ratios."

Earlier this week, NSWNMA members rejected the NSW government's insulting 1.04% pay offer.

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