



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

22 June, 2021

Health crisis set to continue without ratios

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has labelled today's state budget a missed opportunity, after the NSW government failed to address the need for nurse-to-patient ratios in public hospitals.

Despite the NSW government's 2.5% public sector wages backflip, nurses and midwives questioned whether it was another attempt to silence their safe staffing concerns.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said members were undeterred and planned to stay the course in pursuing mandated nurse-to-patient ratios on every shift in all health facilities.

"Today's budget was a missed opportunity by the NSW government to address the widespread staffing issues raised by thousands of nurses and midwives across the state," said Mr Holmes.

"Evidence our public health system is in crisis is growing day after day. The NSW government's own hospital data shows the enormous strain health workers are grappling with. It is relentless.

"Relying on the goodwill of nurses and midwives to shoulder excessive workloads has carried the NSW government through a global pandemic however, ignoring the need for ratios has prompted many to walk away.

"We are losing nurses and midwives to Queensland and Victoria because those states have mandated nurse-to-patient ratios and better pay. The NSW government needs to step up before our nursing and midwifery workforce shortage gets even worse."

The NSWNMA acknowledged the need for health infrastructure improvements, but insisted urgent investment in safe staffing was vital.

"Our communities do need new hospitals and health upgrades, but those buildings aren't much use if they aren't staffed with proper nurse-to-patient ratios to maximise health outcomes for patients," said Mr Holmes.

"Bricks and mortar don't save lives – nurses, midwives and a team of health professionals do."

This morning, a group of nurses and midwives braved the wet to greet MPs as they arrived at NSW Parliament House and called for mandated ratios, including one nurse to three patients (1:3) in emergency departments and 1:4 on other wards.

In recent weeks, thousands of nurses and midwives have walked off the job, closed beds or rallied at more than 30 public health sites across the state, highlighting the desperate need for safe staffing.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Brett Holmes, General Secretary, NSWNMA 0414 550 324

Gia Hayne, Media Advisor, NSWNMA 0488 015 317