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Future of Delegate Multi-Purpose Service 'clear as mud'

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has backed urgent calls for the state government to provide more certainty to aged care residents and staff at Delegate Multi-Purpose Service (MPS) in the state's far south.

Residents' families, community members and nurses remain concerned about the future of the MPS, after Southern NSW Local Health District confirmed staffing was only guaranteed until early January.

NSWNMA Delegate MPS Branch President, Lucinda Ingram, said the situation was less than ideal for nursing staff, patients, and the aged care residents, who all feel anxious about what the future holds.

"This is a really horrible predicament for our members, particularly when they live and work in this close-knit regional community," said Ms Ingram.

"Our MPS might be small with just 15 beds but it provides an invaluable public health service to Delegate and the surrounding areas.

"It's been a tough year for staff, showing up shift after shift to care for our community and keeping patients safe throughout the pandemic, only to learn our service may be downgraded and we'll move to a 'roster-to-roster' operating model. It's devastating."

NSWNMA Organiser, Pippa Watts, said to date consultation with the LHD had been appalling and questions about the future of the federally funded residential aged care beds remained unclear.

"There are locals reliant on the ten residential aged care beds in Delegate MPS. We've heard there's even a waitlist of community members wanting access, but rather than discuss how to keep the beds open and available, the LHD has begun closing them," said Mrs Watts.

"Only half of the residential aged care beds are currently occupied and staff have been told there are to be no further admissions. We're also aware the LHD wants to downgrade the emergency department to an assessment treatment centre, run by appointment only.

"There are potentially consequences for across the border as well, given a number of community nurses operate out of Delegate MPS and provide care to patients who live in Victoria.

"This is a really disgraceful way to treat the people of Delegate, particularly when there is a public parliamentary inquiry underway into rural, regional and remote healthcare services.

"We're calling on the NSW government to extend to staff and the people of Delegate the courtesy of knowing their public health service will be available beyond January and to actively recruit more staff."

The NSWNMA said analysis of state government funding to Delegate MPS over recent years indicated a steady decline and ongoing staff shortages have impacted the health facility.



NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association

Media Release

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