

STOP TELLING US TO COPE!

Ratios It's a matter of **LIFE or DEATH**



KEY REASONS

nurses and midwives are taking strike action together

Enough is enough! The health system is NOT coping and is in crisis.

Every shift we are confronted with short staffing, excessive workloads and are stretched beyond what is reasonable or safe to keep our health system functioning.

The NSW government has refused our requests for safe patient care and our immediate calls for shift by shift nursing and midwifery ratios.

In the face of rising COVID-19 cases, the NSW government pushed ahead with 'letting it rip' and appallingly expected the health system to cope!

The Premier and Health Minister have both admitted there are problems with nursing and midwifery staffing levels, and the Treasurer has said our demands are reasonable, and yet they still fail to act.

NSW nurses and midwives are falling behind other states and territories. Fair pay and a PPE allowance with extra breaks is not unreasonable.

The NSW government is intent on clawing back your access to workers' compensation if you contract COVID-19 at work.

We have a professional responsibility to advocate for safe patient care and in the face of government inaction, we must act.

STAND UP AND PARTICIPATE

We will only get results if we take strike action together.
We must all speak up for patient safety and force the NSW government to stop ignoring the needs of nurses and midwives, and the needs of our patients!

www.nswnma.asn.au

March 2022 | Authorised by B.Holmes, General Secretary, NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, 50 O'Dea Avenue Waterloo NSW 2017





Frequently asked questions

Can we get fined for taking industrial action?

No. Penalties can only be imposed on an industrial organisation, such as the NSWNMA, not an individual employee.

Will we lose pay if we take industrial action in work time?

Yes. When you take industrial action, your pay will be docked for the time spent engaging in such stop work action. The *Industrial Relations Act 1996 (NSW)* outlines it is an offence for an employer to pay an employee in respect of time spent engaging in industrial action.

How long will we take industrial action for?

The proposal is for a 24-hour strike, though your local branch may have varied this. The NSWNMA recommended a 24-hour strike as it is clear we need to keep increasing our actions until the NSW government acts.

Can I be disciplined?

It is not appropriate to discipline individuals for collective democratically decided industrial action, however, your employer may attempt to use disciplinary action as a tactic to persuade you against taking industrial action.

They may threaten to discipline you for failing to complete your shift or failing to attend work. If this occurs, please advise your Organiser, or the NSWNMA immediately. This is where strength in numbers is a protection, you should ensure your peers are taking action with you

What happens to my patients if we take action?

Your branch representatives will notify management prior to organised action. We encourage all members to work together to ensure that they maintain life preserving staffing that allows others to exercise their right to strike. Non-members remain on shift.

Can I be deregistered for taking industrial action?

We appreciate nurses and midwives have a duty of care to our patients. Life preserving care will be maintained. The Ministry of Health and Local Health Districts have developed “adapted models of care” with very low staffing levels and non-nursing classifications which the Premier claims to be a “strong coping health system”. These models can be a guide to what the NSW government considers acceptable levels of care.

What happens if NSW Health say I'm acting against a direction of the IRC?

The Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) can make an order against the Association and its members, trying to persuade us not to stand up for safe staffing by taking industrial action. This is what happened when nurses and midwives took action for safe staffing in February. Whilst the Association can be fined for not complying with the IRC orders, individual workers are not targeted for fines.

Employers may try to dissuade nurses and midwives with talk of orders or distribute copies of the orders, just remember that the community needs to hear the truth – current staffing levels are inadequate, unsafe and putting patients at risk. The Council of the NSWNMA encourages members to maintain the pressure.

Management have said the IRC has ordered the strike not go ahead and therefore the strike is cancelled – is this true?

Members of the NSWNMA vote to take strike action. If the IRC makes orders against us, advise your manager that you'll await direction from your union. Keep an eye on your email, mobile phone for SMS, NSWNMA social media channels and the NSWNMA website for updates.

www.nswnma.asn.au

March 2022 | Authorised by B.Holmes, General Secretary, NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, 50 O'Dea Avenue Waterloo NSW 2017