



5 August 2022

## Nurses and midwives' fight for ratios rolls on

Hundreds of nurses and midwives have called on the NSW government to take responsibility for the understaffing crisis currently hampering the public health system and voted to continue the fight for nurse-to-patient ratios.

During the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Sydney, delegates and members described the widespread risks and chaos nurses and midwives are working under every hour of every shift.

A resolution moved by NSWNMA Tamworth Base Hospital Branch called on Health Minister and Regional Health Minister to urgently visit rural and regional health facilities and speak with clinicians to discuss staffing and workload issues supported by their union, without hospital executives.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Shaye Candish, said there was a high level of disconnect between the dire situation across the health system and the NSW government's perceptions, given the reluctance to address ongoing concerns.

"Overtime and working short is becoming normalised. This is not safe staffing and the growing evidence of burnout and fatigue among nurses and midwives is beyond alarming," said Ms Candish.

"Our members are fed up with being ignored by the NSW government and they are desperate for change. They have been put through enormous moral injury and are done being overworked."

A reoccurring theme across the conference was a genuine commitment to continue speaking up and to pursue safe staffing on every shift, in every ward, at every hospital.

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Michael Whaites, said it was imperative the NSW government started listening to the calls of the highly skilled clinicians and their professional input.

"Right across the state, members have indicated that not enough is being done to address serious safe staffing concerns and they are determined to be heard," said Mr Whaites.

"Nurses and midwives, regardless of their specialty area, have been advocating to improve patient safety at every turn. It is mind blowing that the NSW government is not heeding the warnings of our members – they are ones living and breathing the crisis across our health system.

"It is unconscionable clinical professionals' voices are not being heard."

NSWNMA delegates and members indicated they would continue raising public awareness on the benefits of introducing nursing and midwifery ratios to improve patient safety and the future sustainability of the workforce.

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