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Nurses and midwives' rallies for ratios roll on

From Tweed Heads to Albury, Randwick to Broken Hill, a tsunami of scrubs were visible across NSW today as thousands of angry nurses and midwives walked off the job for the third time this year in their fight for safe staffing ratios.

Frustrated by the NSW government's unwillingness to negotiate on nursing and midwifery ratios, public sector members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) have taken 24-hour strike action through until 7am tomorrow, 2 September.

Led by a 24-hour picket of Western Sydney nurses and midwives outside Westmead Hospital, [over 70 local community rallies](#) have also taken place in rural towns, regional cities and across Sydney.

Joining crowds of members and supporters in Gosford, Newcastle, Bankstown and Westmead during the day, NSWNMA General Secretary, Shaye Candish, said the NSW government's refusal to consider ratios to improve patient outcomes and guarantee a safe working environment sends a message that nurses and midwives are not valued.

"It is a shame on this state that we have to continue to demonstrate, in order to give patients the care that they deserve," said Ms Candish.

"The longer this government stalls on adopting safe nurse-to-patient ratios, the more we'll continue to see more nurses and midwives leaving the profession. We want ratios, safer workplaces and fair pay.

"The evidence is clear from Queensland and Victoria that ratios do save lives, ratios save money, and ratios will keep nurses in health and midwives supporting mums and babies.

"Over 3,000 nurses and midwives have moved interstate in the past few years. It's time we caught up with the rest of the country and provided these highly skilled health professionals with the support they need to deliver the clinical care our communities deserve."

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Michael Whaites, said nurses and midwives were sick and tired of being told to keep quiet, keep working short staffed, keep accepting overtime and keep turning up shift after shift, day after night.

"Nurses and midwives are constantly understaffed on their wards and units right across the state and because of this, bad patient outcomes are occurring," said Mr Whaites outside St George Hospital.

"This is not a public health system at the top of its game. This is not a system that's the envy of other states – nurses and midwives are leaving in droves because the health workforce has been neglected, the conditions are abhorrent, and the staffing system needs an overhaul.

"We need safe staffing ratios in every ward, on every shift, in every hospital and health service. We need a government brave enough to accept advice from the same clinicians who have carried this state on their shoulders and are in the business of saving lives every single day."

Nurses and midwives are braving the elements to maintain a picket outside Westmead Hospital through until 7am Friday, as they continue conversations with community members about ratios.



Life-preserving services are also being maintained in public hospitals and health services for the duration the strike.

The NSWNMA said it would continue to advocate for ratios on behalf of its members and reiterated calls for urgent action by the Premier and NSW government to guarantee safe staffing with ratios.

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