



21 September 2022

## NSW edges closer to public hospital staffing overhaul

Improvements to patient safety and better working conditions for NSW nurses and midwives are a step closer, following today's announcement by NSW Labor to overhaul minimum staffing across the public health system.

NSW Opposition Leader Chris Minns confirmed a Labor government would scrap the current outdated rostering system and replace it with an enforceable, minimum shift by shift staffing model, with improvements to dedicated specialty areas, such as emergency departments, from mid-2023.

Responding to the policy, NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) General Secretary, Shaye Candish, welcomed efforts by NSW Labor to lay the foundations for significant reform of the health workforce and for listening to the issues raised statewide by nurses and midwives.

"Our public health system is in desperate need of serious reform and addressing the systemic issues impacting the nursing and midwifery workforce is central to that," said Ms Candish.

"What NSW Labor has put on the table would go a long way towards repairing the broken staffing system we have in NSW, and towards tackling the overwork and fatigue being experienced by the majority of nurses and midwives who are keeping our public hospitals functioning.

"Nurses and midwives are vital to the health and economic stability of our state. Their contribution to our communities is significant and deserving of much needed attention. It's refreshing to see NSW Labor has recognised this and is listening to clinical professionals about what is needed to fix our health system.

"We'll continue talking to NSW Labor about what they're proposing, just like we'll continue talking to the NSW government, the Greens, and anyone else who will meet and listen to us."

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Michael Whaites, said the commitment from NSW Labor signals a significant injection of hope to nurses and midwives across the state, but acknowledged it wasn't the full nurse-to-patient ratios the union had been campaigning on.

"NSW Labor's safe staffing levels proposal will help to address the widespread workforce problems in the health system, and it's certainly a lot closer to what's needed compared to anything the NSW government has offered to date," said Mr Whaites.

"You only have to take the time to speak with any nurse or midwife in NSW to fully appreciate how extraordinarily tough their conditions are and the grave concerns they hold for patient safety because the workforce has been neglected.

"For too long, nurses and midwives' professional and clinical perspectives have been ignored by the NSW government. They have continually been asked to do more, with less, to the point that we now have a nursing and midwifery retention problem in NSW.

"With the right interventions, we can turn these staffing issues around and restore confidence back into the health system, which will also help attract future nurses and midwives to work in a NSW hospital.

"We welcome NSW Labor's announcement however, the NSW government could act on the staffing crisis today.



NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association

## Media Release

“We will continue to pursue every political party to support a transparent and enforceable, shift by shift minimum staffing ratios system in NSW for as long as it takes.”

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