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Strike postponed but nurses still aggrieved on northern beaches

Nurses and midwives from Manly and Mona Vale Branches of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) have decided to delay strike action planned for today but will push ahead with a rally in their own time from 1pm at Manly Hospital.

Talks are scheduled to continue between the NSWNMA, its members, Healthscope and the Ministry of Health over the coming weeks to address skill mix issues, employment conditions and staffing at the new Northern Beaches Hospital.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said the late negotiations were a much needed development for nurses and midwives, however, no strong commitment has been made to obtain job security for all staff and ensure patient safety at the new facility.

"It's a step in the right direction but with just six months to go until staff move into the new Northern Beaches Hospital, we need certainty – not to be left in limbo. Without these assurances around staffing and skill mix, Healthscope and the NSW Government are risking the safety of patients when the new hospital opens," said Mr Holmes.

In lieu of the planned strike, nurses and midwives will stage a rally from 1pm to 2pm outside the front of Manly Hospital today.

"Our members are determined to have their concerns heard and will go ahead with an action tomorrow in their own time. This just highlights how serious this problem is. We know the lack of transparency and confusion around job matching has already resulted in staff leaving Manly and Mona Vale Hospitals. We can't afford to lose any more nurses or midwives in the area," said Mr Holmes.

"In the coming weeks, we will persist in our efforts to obtain clear documentation around skill mix and transitional safety net arrangements with staff. We're also seeking further clarification on how redeployment will be managed for those not moving to the new hospital."

The NSWNMA is continuing negotiations around the following staff concerns:

- The ability to return to a job in the Public Health System and take all accrued entitlements and not be paid out
- That the transfer payment allocated to those nurses and midwives transferring to the new Northern Beaches Hospital will not be required to be paid back if an employee decides to then transfer back to the Public Health System
- Specific position descriptions and hours of work for all nursing and midwifery staff provided
- Staff to be matched to appropriate skill sets and a thorough explanation and rationale if they are not matched appropriately



- The complete nursing and midwifery structure, including all classifications in Full Time Equivalent (FTE) for all wards and specialty areas
- That staff who are for redeployment, be redeployed within the Local Area Health District

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