



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Griffith Base Hospital desperate for a staffing boost

Six days out from the Murray by-election, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has called on Murrumbidgee Local Health District to address serious nursing staff issues at Griffith Base Hospital.

Members of the NSWNMA's Griffith Base Hospital Branch highlighted concerns to hospital management and have pleaded for all outstanding job vacancies to be filled as a matter of urgency across the emergency department, intensive care unit, operating theatre and general wards.

NSWNMA Organiser, Zoe-Anne Guinea, said the amount of overtime being forced on nursing staff to cover the gaps was unsustainable and was beginning to impact the delivery of safe patient care.

"The branch has been raising concerns through a Reasonable Workloads Committee with little improvement," Ms Guinea said.

"We know there are currently 30 full-time equivalent positions vacant at Griffith Base. Earlier this year the hospital received approval for five additional emergency department staff, but to date those positions have not been filled.

"The hospital's intensive care unit was also allocated extra staff, yet these positions remain vacant.

"Understaffing has become such an issue that the nurses who are on shift are regularly missing meal breaks and working overtime.

"Griffith Base Hospital Branch has written to hospital management, asking it to detail what strategies are being used to try and recruit nursing staff to the positions available."

At the weekend, NSWNMA members approached a number of the candidates in the upcoming Murray by-election and encouraged them to sign a pledge of support for local nurses and midwives.

"Our members continue to campaign for improvements to nurse-to-patient ratios, including within maternity services," said Ms Guinea.

"There are also inconsistencies across Murrumbidgee LHD in relation to funding for 10-hour night shifts which ensure safe patient care, proper handover procedures and education for nurses.

"Members are also encouraging candidates to champion for incentive programs to attract more nurses and midwives to rural areas."

The NSWNMA has called on all Local Health Districts to be more proactive and innovative in their recruitment strategies to address the issue.

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