



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Wee Waa nurses speak up for patient safety

Fed up with delays as a result of medical staff shortages at the local hospital, members of Wee Waa Community Hospital Branch of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) have raised their concerns directly with Hunter New England Local Health District and management.

Acting General Secretary of the NSWNMA, Judith Kiejda, said fortunately local nurses' concerns have been heard and improvements at the hospital are imminent.

"For a number of weeks, doctor shortages at Wee Waa Hospital have created flow-on implications for hard-working nursing staff and the delivery of safe patient care to the local community," Ms Kiejda said.

"Our members were forced to deal with these implications firsthand and have spoken out on behalf of the community, calling for the underlying issues to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

"Hospital management and Hunter New England Local Health District have a duty of care to maintain a high standard of patient safety, as well as access to adequate medical coverage within this vital public health service.

"Fortunately, management has since sat down with local nurses and agreed to a number of measures aimed at mitigating the issues and will also implement steps to help prevent a reoccurrence."

NSWNMA Organiser, Jo-Anne McKeough, said local nurses were pleased their concerns regarding patient safety had been acknowledged and confirmed they would continue to monitor the situation.

"We want the community to know nurses have been advocating on their behalf," said Ms McKeough.

"We've expressed the widespread frustration at how these issues eventuated, but also the length of time it's taken to address them.

"Management has given us assurances they are in the process of implementing new measures to address the current medical shortages and other policies will be put in place to limit the flow-on implications for nurses and other hospital staff.

"The branch will certainly be involved in the process to improve the current Business Continuity Plan, localised escalation plans, the upskilling of staff, as well as how the facility coordinates with other hospitals in the region."

The NSWNMA confirmed it would continue to support Wee Waa Community Hospital Branch until all their concerns were addressed and services were restored to the local community's satisfaction.

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