



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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New guaranteed ratios system will be delivered under NSW Labor

NSW Opposition Leader, Luke Foley made this promise to nurses and midwives from across the state during the final day of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association's (NSWNMA) 73rd Annual Conference today.

"I commit a future Labor government to introducing shift-by-shift nurse to patient ratios," Mr Foley said.

"We need shift by shift nurse to patient ratios to deliver safe staffing levels, to deliver you a better workplace, to deliver a better quality of care to millions of our fellow citizens in our mighty public health system.

"We will work with you to deliver nurse to patient ratios explicitly in your [Nurses] Award in 2019.

"I gave the emergency department and paediatric ward commitment in 2015. Today I also give the general commitment to shift by shift nurse to patient ratios. Today I announce that an incoming Labor government will bring ratios to regional hospitals and bring regional staffing levels up to city levels."

"I hear you. It's time for safe staffing. We have a great public health system but we have to fight to keep it that way"

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, welcomed the announcement and highlighted the difference it would make for patients, particularly those in regional NSW.

"Today's commitment from NSW Labor is a giant leap in the right direction for patient safety. After eight years, nurses and midwives are finally being listened to," Mr Holmes said.

"Under this system, the health of country communities will be made a priority and for the first time, emergency departments and other specialty areas will have a new, reliable ratios system with a guaranteed minimum ratio on every shift. This is a real breakthrough.

"Ratios *will* save lives – evidence proves it. It's a reliable system that meets the needs of patients and will put NSW on the right track to a more sustainable health system.

"The difference between a nurse caring for four patients in a ward and five patients can be a matter of life or death. International research shows that better ratios result in fewer patient complications and fewer deaths."

Under the plan, there will be a guaranteed nurse to patient ratios in medical and surgical wards on every shift across all major and district NSW hospitals, creating a clear understanding of how many patients nurses have to care for.

Hundreds more nurses will be employed in "B" and "C" group hospitals throughout the state, lifting staffing levels up to those of "A" group hospitals in metro areas. In addition, specialty areas, such as emergency departments and paediatric wards will have ratios of 1:3, providing safer staffing to those areas that need it most.



The NSWNMA has been campaigning for expanded and improved nurse to patient ratios since 2011, when some mandatory ratios were won.

The 73rd Annual Conference concludes today at Rosehill Gardens Grand Pavilion, Sydney.

For further explanation of what this means for 'A', 'B', and 'C' hospitals, refer to this document.

Footage is also available of Luke Foley's speech upon request.

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