



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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5,000 nurses & midwives lacks nurse-to-patient ratios certainty

On the back of another budget surplus, and projected surpluses over four years, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has reiterated calls for the NSW Government to introduce a transparent statewide nurse-to-patient ratios system.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Brett Holmes, said while the government's \$10 billion hospital infrastructure upgrades outlined in the 2019-20 budget were welcome, he warned ongoing staffing issues would continue to plague the state's public hospitals until the government's preferred staffing model was overhauled.

"We welcome the government's commitment to 5,000 more nurses and midwives, but we know more than 3,800 full-time equivalent nurses and 252 midwives are needed to meet existing growth in the public hospital sector," Mr Holmes said.

"We acknowledge the remaining 893 nurses and 48 midwives will assist many metropolitan and regional hospitals to boost their current nursing hours per patient.

"Unfortunately, this is a mechanism proven to be fallible to management manipulation, which is why we will continue our long-term campaign for real nurse-to-patient ratios, guaranteed shift by shift.

"We know that without minimum nurse-to-patient ratios, nurses and midwives will continue to struggle to meet demand and maintain safe patient care.

"Forced to contend with a rolling 2.5 per cent salary cap, public sector nurses and midwives will also be concerned to see the government's latest attack on public servants' entitlements, on the basis of 'when will they be coming for ours?'"

Mr Holmes said the NSWNMA was yet to receive any specific details from the NSW Ministry of Health regarding the election commitment to significantly increase resources across Peer Group B and C hospitals across the state.

The NSWNMA confirmed it would continue campaigning for minimum, mandated nurse-to-patient ratios to be introduced in NSW, similar to legislation already introduced in Victoria and Queensland.

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