



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

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Data confirms huge pressure on public hospital staff

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) says new data released by the Bureau of Health Information (BHI) is further evidence of the enormous strain being put on nurses and midwives working across the NSW public health system.

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Judith Kiejda, said the increased emergency department presentations and admissions to public hospitals highlight the growing risks to safe patient care and the urgent need for safe, transparent nurse-to-patient ratios.

"It's no wonder our members, both metro and regional, are prepared to walk out or contemplate leaving the nursing or midwifery professions entirely," Ms Kiejda said.

"Clearly, our public hospital system is under enormous pressure. This is being compounded by widespread issues including delays in recruitment, excessive requests to do extra shifts or overtime, ignoring unexpected leave or replacing these vacancies with less experienced staff.

"Our members are frustrated. They are fatigued. And they burning out at a rapid rate.

"It is unsustainable and it's ultimately patient safety that is what suffers, not to mention the safety of hospital staff."

The NSWNMA also noted the BHI's first public reporting of seclusion and restraint events within the state's acute mental health units for the April to June 2019 quarter.

Ms Kiejda said for seclusion or restraint events to be fully understood, the reporting should also depict a patient's risk assessment and the level of violence or aggression they exhibit themselves or towards others.

"Patient safety and staff safety has always been a priority of the NSWNMA, along with evidence based clinical practice that provides the best care for an individual. This must include appropriate nurse-to-patient ratios, such as one to one care in mental health intensive care units," said Ms Kiejda.

"Seclusion and restraint events hold many risks and appropriate measures to help reduce the number of these events will also reduce the exposure of individuals and staff to those associated risks."

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