



19 September 2023

## Staffing ratios must go further to deliver meaningful reform

The NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) has welcomed the initial funding to deliver staffing ratios into NSW public hospitals but maintains more must be done beyond the 2023-24 state budget.

More than \$419 million has been allocated to roll out safe and enforceable ratios, including an extra 1,200 nurses and midwives, while a further \$572 million will secure 1,112 permanent positions.

NSWNMA General Secretary, Shaye Candish, acknowledged the funding was a good start but argued more work was needed to deliver the necessary health reforms in all hospitals across the state.

"This is an important step, the extra nursing and midwifery positions confirmed in the budget are desperately needed in the health system now. However, it's not enough to deliver ratios in full and further investment is needed to repair the decimated workforce," said Ms Candish.

"The government made a commitment to the people of NSW to deliver Safe Staffing across the five key areas of emergency departments, intensive care units, postnatal maternity, Multi-Purpose Services and convert current nursing hours wards to shift by shift ratios, and we intend to hold them accountable to see this introduced statewide.

"The peak of the pandemic may have passed but it certainly remains front of mind for many health staff, and the government must ensure their workloads are safe and sustainable if we are to keep them.

"It's important the government does all it can to retain the skilled nursing and midwifery workforce we currently have, including working with us to improve the rural and remote incentive scheme.

"Similarly, we must attract students and early career nurses or midwives into our public health system and the government's study subsidies, along with a more competitive pay and better working conditions will contribute towards that."

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Michael Whaites, agreed the road to securing ratios in NSW had been a hard fought and confirmed the campaign would continue until the commitment was delivered in full.

"There is a lot of work to be done to repair the public sector workforce, given the widespread staffing deficits, so we are pleased that today there is funding committed to begin that work," said Mr Whaites.

"Our priority has always been to secure safe care for patients and improved working conditions for nurses and midwives, so we need the government to honour its commitment to deliver Safe Staffing in the five key areas across the state.

"The Association continues to meet with government officials as part of the Safe Staffing Levels Taskforce and we are keen to see the implementation process begin in line with our Memorandum of Understanding.



NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association

## Media Release

“Of course, the health infrastructure investments are also welcomed, but we must continue to see the government building on these workforce figures into the future to deliver safe patient care. The commencement of ratios will go a long way to ensuring the new hospitals, wards and units have the staffing within them. The missing piece is a pay rate that is competitive with other states.

“Importantly, recognising the valuable contribution of nurses and midwives remains a priority for our public sector members and we will continue to look at the industrial options available to improve pay.”

---

### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Shaye Candish, NSWNMA General Secretary - 0427 550 194

Michael Whaites, NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary - 0414 550 386

Gia Hayne, NSWNMA Media Advisor - 0488 015 317