

**Media release - Tuesday 5 November 2024**

**The Northern Beaches community deserves better: Scamps backs nurses' call for safe staff-to-patient ratios at Northern Beaches Hospital**

Independent Federal Member for Mackellar Dr Sophie Scamps MP supports local nurses' call for safe nurse-to-patient ratios at Northern Beaches Hospital.

A planned work stoppage by Northern Beaches Hospital nursing staff today will highlight nurses' concerns that patients at the privately run hospital are not receiving the same level of care as patients in public hospitals around the State.

Mandated nurse-to-patient ratios were announced following the NSW Government's Safe Staffing Levels Taskforce earlier this year, which prioritised boosting the number of frontline healthcare workers in all NSW public hospitals.

Northern Beaches Hospital, the only remaining Public-Private Partnership in NSW, is not subject to the mandated nurse-to-patient care ratios that operate in all other public hospitals in the State.

"This is simply unacceptable. The people of the Northern Beaches deserve to have the same quality of care and safety in our local hospital," Dr Scamps said.

"As a former emergency doctor, I know firsthand that providing the highest quality care to patients relies on hospitals being adequately staffed so that nurses and doctors are not overworked and can provide safe and effective care."

Northern Beaches Hospital nurses have asked Healthscope, the private operator of the hospital, to include equivalent nurse-to-patient ratios to those mandated in public hospitals in their latest Enterprise Bargaining negotiations without success, with the hospital operator refusing to agree to their request.

"Our nurses and midwives are being pushed beyond what is manageable," NSW Nurses and Midwives Association Northern Beaches Hospital Branch President Sheridan Brady said.

"We have a professional obligation and a moral conviction to give each patient the care they deserve. Sadly, it's just not an option to give the best care we are capable of without safe staffing ratios.

"Poor staffing has led to burnout and fatigue and the daily dilemma of not being able to provide consistent quality care has left us broken," Ms Brady said.

Nurses have also asked for improved working conditions - including a 15% pay rise after years of stagnant wages, better maternity leave, carers leave and other entitlements - which are far below other hospitals, forcing many nurses to move to public hospitals, interstate or take a second job to stay afloat.

“As this issue clearly illustrates, having a private entity running a public hospital is problematic.

I am proud of the work I have achieved with Michael Regan, the State Member for Wakehurst, in getting a full performance audit of the hospital and I urge the community to make a submission,” Dr Scamps said.

Submissions to the public audit of Northern Beaches Hospital close Friday November 15 and can be made here - <https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/northern-beaches-hospital>

**ENDS**

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