

The Area News

After the release of the regional health inquiry, the NSW Nurses and Midwives Association is encouraging the state government to take heed quickly.

The findings were bleak, showcasing a significant drop in quality of care compared to metropolitan areas.

NSWNMA General Secretary Brett Holmes, said the findings were a shocking indictment.

"On behalf of our members, we certainly want the NSW government to act and repair the holes in health service delivery across all rural and regional areas. A fundamental part of that is addressing the clinical workforce issues," said Mr Holmes.

Nurses and midwives continue long battle for conditions

Dalton says health inquiry recommendations are not enough

"As this inquiry uncovered, there's a myriad of short staffing concerns in regional health settings, which has put unrelenting pressure on nurses and midwives during every shift. The circumstances they face while trying to deliver acute care is unreasonable and, on many occasions, unsafe."

The staffing crisis in hospitals has been known for quite some time, with nurses and midwives striking to draw attention to the huge workloads and poor pay in regional healthcare.

The key demand has been for mandated nurse to patient ratios, a feature notably absent from the inquiries' recommendations.

"While we welcome the committee's recommendation for a workforce review, the urgent implementation of safe staffing ratios is paramount and would help to address these issues," Mr Holmes added.

Cancer support network Can Assist was more pleased with the recommendations from the regional health inquiry.

They particularly emphasised the increase to travel and accommodation rebates after their long campaign for higher rebates.

Can Assist President and Chairwoman Vicki Meyer said that they would continue supporting cancer patients in the regions.

"Can Assist's effectiveness, collaboration and hard work are evident in our submissions, and we have clearly identified the problems, which has vindicated by the Inquiry's findings. Our communities have stepped up and have been finally heard - and Can Assist will continue to fulfil our role in supporting those in need," she said.

Executive director Emma Phillips added.

"Patients are increasingly turning to charities like Can Assist to help fund the charges and, as a result, not-for-profit accommodation facilities and charities are becoming increasingly reliant on fundraising and donations to keep charges from rising further. Which is why an increase in rebates can't come soon enough."

By Cai Holroyd

Updated May 12 2022 - 12:17pm, first published May 9 2022 - 11:00am