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1 April 2022

Brett Holmes
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Dear Brett

Victorian nurses, midwives and personal care workers once again send our support to your courageous members who participated in a second round of statewide industrial action on Thursday 31 March 2022.

While such action is never something to be taken lightly, it was heartening to see your members standing up for staff and patients. It is distressing that they had no other option, though, and we share your frustration at the Perrottet NSW Government's unwillingness to continue discussions or to take your members' concerns about the staffing crisis seriously.

While most of Australia returns to some form of normal, the ongoing COVID-19 situation remains extraordinarily difficult for nurses, midwives and carers. But even when hospitalisations stabilise, we know a return to pre-COVID normal for NSWNMA and members is not an option. Not when normal means no nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios, and wages that are going backwards in real terms.

Following the temporary surge workforce models implemented in Victoria to manage the pandemic response, most Victorian health services have now resumed legislated shift-by-shift ratios that comply with the state's *Safe Patient Care Act*. This also means a return to the Andrews Victorian Government's five-year program to introduce new and improved ratios.

Victorian ANMF members fought hard to secure ratios and their benefits are not theoretical: they are a matter of life or death. Victorian public sector aged care facilities, which have legislated nurse-to-patient ratios, reported 14 deaths over the course of the pandemic; federally run private aged care facilities in the state, which are not bound by legislation regarding ratios or skills mix, have reported 1230 deaths in the same period.

We sincerely hope the Perrottet Government proves more willing to listen to NSWNMA's nursing and midwifery members this time, and to finally commit to introducing shift-by-shift ratios in NSW public hospitals and aged care facilities. We also support members' calls for a fair wage increase to compensate for their effective pay cut in the 2020-21 financial year following the state government freezing wages during the pandemic.

Yours in solidarity

Lisa Fitzpatrick
Secretary
ANMF (Vic Branch)