



The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

**Minister for Health
Minister for Medical Research**

MEDIA RELEASE

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MINISTER FOR HEALTH SAYS “THANK YOU” TO NURSES AND MIDWIVES

The Minister for Health, Jillian Skinner, joined nurses at Australia’s first hospital today to celebrate International Nurses Day.

Mrs Skinner told nurses at a breakfast at Sydney Hospital that the public health system simply could not operate without them.

“Every day, nurses and midwives make a real difference to patients’ lives,” Mrs Skinner said.

“That’s why employing 2475 more nurses and midwives was a key election commitment of the O’Farrell Government, and that’s why it gives me great pleasure today to announce that since being elected just over a year ago we have surpassed that target.”

Mrs Skinner said the NSW nursing and midwifery workforce had now been increased by 2502 – a 5.6 per cent rise achieved through the employment of record numbers of nurses and midwives in more than 100 hospitals across the state.

“These additional nurses and midwives join close to 46,000 public sector nurses and midwives who care for more than 1.5 million patients in our public hospitals each year.

“Today is our opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate our nurses and midwives, and most importantly, to say thank you,” she said.

Mrs Skinner presented certificates to nurses Ruth Brisbane, a 40 year veteran of Sydney Eye Hospital, and Jill Grasso, who has worked at the hospital for 33 years, in recognition of their outstanding long term commitment to the hospital and its patients.

She also announced the awarding of this year’s Judith Meppem Scholarships to nurses Jamie Mann-Farrar from Concord Hospital; Denise Edgar from Wollongong Hospital; Frances McNulty from Wyong Central Community Health; and Paul De Carlo from Concord Centre for Mental Health.

The annual scholarships provide an opportunity for nurses and midwives to undertake study tours overseas with the aim of learning by observation of best practice.

Mrs Skinner also presented a certificate of appreciation to Debra Thoms, the state's Chief Nurse for the past six years, who has been appointed to the inaugural position of Chief Executive Officer of the Australian College of Nursing.

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world on May 12, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. International Midwives Day was celebrated last week.