



Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW NURSES HONOURED FOR THEIR SKILL AND COMPASSION

Health Minister Jillian Skinner today thanked the state's nurses for their commitment, compassion and professionalism.

Mrs Skinner said International Nurses Day is a time to reflect on the round-the-clock care and emotional support nurses give to more than 1.5 million patients in NSW public hospitals, at home or in the community.

International Nurses Day is celebrated globally on May 12 each year - the birthday of the world's most famous nurse, Florence Nightingale.

"As I visit hospitals around the state, I am struck by the common qualities of dedication, determination, compassion and, of course, clinical excellence which our nurses possess," Mrs Skinner said.

"They may be strangers when our patients first encounter them but, in many cases, they bear witness to momentous events in people's lives.

"We are indebted to them for the vital role they play in our society."

Earlier this month, 500 nurses, midwives and allied health professionals from around NSW gathered in Sydney for the Essentials of Care (EOC) Showcase.

Essentials of Care is a program that is designed to enhance safe, compassionate and dignified care to patients while improving workplace culture.

Mrs Skinner said she is impressed by the range of local EOC innovations being led by nurses at hospitals around the state. These include:

- **Concord Hospital Burns Unit** - staff devised a process to significantly reduce the amount of skin harvested from a patient, resulting in less pain during recovery.
- **Dubbo Hospital Medical Ward** - nursing staff have changed their model of care to a team nursing model, which has resulted in improvements in nursing documentation, observation and fluid balance chart documentations.
- **Cumberland Hospital (Acacia Unit - Mental Health Rehabilitation Unit)** - by creating a sensory garden in the Acacia Unit, nursing staff were able to achieve very significant decreases in the number of aggressive incidents, staff injuries, episodes of seclusion and the use of restraint, as well as a 70% reduction in staff sick leave.

- **Woy Woy Hospital Transitional Care Unit** - staff designed a piece of equipment to help patients with upper limb impairments to care for their diabetes at home, reducing the likelihood of residential aged care admission. The unit also introduced *Time To Get Active*, a program of activities such as tai chi, yoga, indoor walking and interactive games for aged care patients to improve social engagement and mobility.
- **Wyong Hospital Cardiac Care Unit** - a survey of patients led the unit to develop a *Common Cardiac Terms and Information* brochure to help patients and families better understand the complex language of cardiology.

“These are fantastic examples of nurses leading local solutions at local hospitals to make a difference in our health system,” Mrs Skinner said.

NSW Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer Susan Pearce said International Nurses Day is a celebration of the skill and dedication of NSW nurses. Midwives were honoured on International Midwives Day (May 5).

“Nurses provide an invaluable service to communities, in NSW and across the world,” Ms Pearce said.

“There are very few of us who have not been touched by the care of a nurse - not just in the clinical care given but the compassion and warmth shown.”

Mrs Skinner said she is proud of the NSW Liberal & Nationals Government’s achievement in recruiting nurses and midwives.

“Prior to coming to government in March 2011, we promised to increase the nursing and midwifery workforce by 2,475 over four years. We met this milestone in half that time,” she said.

“There are now 4,100 more nurses and midwives (2,800 full-time equivalent) employed by NSW Health than when we were elected.”

NSW now has more than 47,500 nurses and midwives.

The theme of this year’s International Nurses Day is *Nurses: A Force for Change - A Vital Resource for Health*.