



## **Nurse to patient ratio becomes law in Queensland**

**Date: Monday May 16, 2016**

A Nurse to Patient ratio has just been legislated across Queensland, strengthening patient safety & enhancing high quality health services across the State.

The Palaszczuk government has delivered on an election commitment by legislating minimum nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios across Queensland. This legislation will change the way that hospitals are staffed, with the ratios enhancing patient safety and ensuring the delivery of high quality health services across the State.

Queensland joins Victoria as the only other State in the country to legislate how many patients can safely be allocated to a nurse or midwife, with research suggesting these changes improve patient outcomes and can be lifesaving.

The Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill 2015 amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 by establishing a legislative framework which ensures safe nursing and midwifery staff numbers. The amendment regulation prescribes ratios of one nurse or midwife to every four patients for morning and afternoon shifts, and one nurse or midwife to every seven patients for a night shift.

Nurses may adjust the number of patients allocated above the stipulated ratio according to a number of variables, including patient activity, acuity and other relevant factors, providing flexibility within appropriate safeguards to ensure best outcomes are delivered.

Speaking during the second reading of the Bill, the honourable Cameron Dick, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, acknowledged the instrumental role that the Queensland Nurses' Union had played in advocating for, and assisting in developing, this legislation. Minister Dick spoke of the great benefits these changes will bring to patients, through improving their care, and the benefits to nursing staff through providing a safer workload and enabling the delivery of expert, professional services to their patients.

The Queensland Nurses' Union will be instrumental in the implementation of these changes. Keep in touch with your union to stay on top of how this will impact you at work.

Having worked with the QNU for many years, we're delighted to continue supporting the essential work they do, and congratulate them in driving this important change to Queensland's public health system to the benefit of all Queenslanders.

*Image credit:* [Queensland Nurses Union](#)

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