

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Ambulance Services



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SAFER RATIOS FOR OUR NURSES AND MIDWIVES ENSHRINED IN LAW

Legislation to enshrine the Allan Labor Government's stronger, safer nurse- and midwife-to-patient ratios into law has today passed the Victorian Parliament – ensuring the very best care for Victorian patients and their families.

Amendments to the *Safe Patient Care (Nurse to Patient and Midwife to Patient Ratios) Act* were introduced last month, to put more nurses and midwives on shift – at all hours of the day.

From Royal Assent, there will be more nurses in Victoria's busiest intensive care units (ICUs), emergency departments, high dependency and coronary care units, and more midwives on maternity wards overnight.

The new ratios deliver on an important election commitment, driven by advocacy from Victorian nurses, midwives and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF).

Following extensive consultation with nurses, midwives, the ANMF, and health services, the new ratios set in stone:

- the 'gold standard' 1:1 nurse to occupied bed ratio in ICUs on all shifts for all Level 1 and 2 hospitals – meaning that every occupied ICU bed has a dedicated nurse assigned to it at all times. ICUs will also require a team leader and liaison nurse for the very first time
- improved staffing ratios in resuscitation cubicles in emergency departments on morning shifts – bringing morning shifts in line with afternoon and night shifts
- 1:4 midwife-to-patient ratios in postnatal and antenatal wards on night shifts – down from 1:6
- an in-charge nurse on night shifts in standalone High Dependency Units and Coronary Care Units.

Only Labor truly backs Victoria's hardworking nursing and midwifery workforce – unlike the former Liberal Government, which attempted to trade away nurse and patient safety during Enterprise Agreement negotiations.

It is why in 2015, under a Labor Government, Victoria enshrined nurse- and midwife-to-patient ratios into law.

The new ratios build on the Labor Government's 28.4 per cent pay increase for our hardworking nurses and midwives – helping to retain and recruit more nurses so more Victorians can get the very best care.

These improved ratios have been backed by a \$101.3 million investment to support health services with hiring or rostering additional nurses and midwives.

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're giving our hardworking nurses and midwives the respect and support they need to do what they do best – while supporting their safety and wellbeing at work."

"We have once again enshrined into law new, stronger ratios – because we know that this will mean even better care for Victorians when they need it."