

# 'Cruel' decision

## Government freezes pending pay rise for nurses

By Daniel Hughes

Nurses on the front lines of the Coronavirus pandemic are facing the prospect of what they claim is a "cruel" wage freeze being legislated by the state government.

New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association Finley branch secretary Matt Mills said he is disappointed in the government.

He said all hospital staff watch the verbal

support from politicians, yet they refuse to support a wage increase next financial year.

"We are on the front line and hearing praise from (Premier) Gladys Berejiklian, but it doesn't fill us with confidence when her government turns around and tries to freeze our wages," Mr Mills said.

"During our last enterprise agreement, we had a lot of claims lodged regarding patient:nurse ratios, so we had a 2.5 per cent pay increase negotiated then.

"To combat the potential wage freeze, the union has asked us to write to our local member of parliament.

"Helen Dalton (Member for Murray) has been amazing; she has been very supportive, but we need other members around the state to follow suit to stop this.

"Last financial year politicians received an eight per cent pay rise and we only had 2.5. If they didn't get such big increase each year, maybe the government could afford our 2.5 per cent.

"For myself, that would be a little more than \$1 an hour increase, and for drivers and cleaning staff it would only be about 50 cents.

"It's not a lot but over a year, this really makes a difference."

Mr Mills said regional hospitals already struggle to attract new staff and if a wage freeze is confirmed, it will be even harder.

"We are very understaffed in our rural towns; our patient to nurse ratio is not the same as metropolitan areas.

"If we aren't offering that monetary incentive to join the industry, how are we going to attract new staff to our rural communities?"

## Support package for aged care

Finley Regional Care will benefit from a share of the \$205 million Coronavirus support package from the Commonwealth Government.

Residential aged care providers in rural communities will receive about \$1350 per resident, compared to \$900 per resident in major metropolitan areas.

The money will assist in additional staffing, training, supporting visitations and connections, and the provision of personal protective equipment.

The payment distribution is linked to the number of residents at FRC.

CEO Ben Levesque said any funding is welcomed with costs running high during Coronavirus lockdown.

"We haven't received anything yet but when we do it will be nice," Mr Levesque said.

"We are thankful to get anything that can help us during this time."

Facilities outside major metropolitan

centres will receive 50 per cent more to cover the additional costs of providing care in these areas.

Federal Member for Farrer Sussan Ley said it was another measure to reinforce the aged care sector, and protect those in care.

"While Australia's rural areas are doing exceptionally well in preventing the spread of the Coronavirus, we must remain vigilant particularly in residential aged care," she said.

## Southern Riv poised to welcome visitors

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Co-owners Mark and Ally Fitzpatrick say they are excited to welcome travellers in to the park for the first time in 10 weeks.

"We will be open for businesses, so travellers are welcome to call and book," Mr Fitzpatrick said.

"I've got a gut feeling our main travellers, Victorian grey nomads who travel to Queensland for warmer weather, will wait a little bit once borders are open.

"I suspect others may wait to see if there is no spike in (Coronavirus) cases before travelling.

"There will be a few travellers who want to move around, but most of our business will come as it warms up again."

Under its new COVID-19 Safe Plan, which is a requirement for all businesses allowed to reopen from next week, the park's amenities blocks will remain restricted until further notice.

"While we haven't opened all our facilities, we are hoping to open as soon as it's safe.

"Most of the caravans that pass through here have their own lavatories to get around that, and we have a dump site here so they can clear their waste before moving on."

While recreation and holiday travel will be allowable from next week, travellers are required to have pre-booked accommodation and plans before setting off on the road.

People must also follow physical



■ Sticky Fingers Candy Shop and Visitor Information Centre proprietor Kathy McFarlane and Kellie Dissegna are encouraging domestic travel to Jerilderie.

distancing, good hygiene practice and understand public health advice is still in place.

Anyone wishing to access a NSW National Park NSW is encouraged to visit [nationalparks.nsw.gov.au](http://nationalparks.nsw.gov.au) to learn more.



Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

### Application for Appointment of Board Members

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Ever wondered who is responsible for keeping Crown reserves operating?

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The Tocumwal Blowhole Land Manager manages the Reserve No. 89393 at Tocumwal notified on 7-Mar-1975 for Public Recreation. The term of appointment will be for a period not exceeding 5 years.

Application for membership can be made via <https://portal.crownland.nsw.gov.au>

For further information contact Peter Bisset on (02) 6990 1801 or go to <https://reservemanager.crownland.nsw.gov.au>

## We all need to work together to prevent the spread of Coronavirus.



The Australian Government has launched a voluntary app, COVIDSafe, to help health officials notify people who may have been exposed to Coronavirus.

The more people who download this important public health app, the safer they and their family will be, the safer our community will be, and the sooner we can get back to business and back to enjoying life.



Scan this code on your smartphone to go directly to your app store and download the app.



**SUSSAN LEY MP**  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FARRER

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