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MEDIA RELEASE

13 January 2025

MINNS LABOR GOVERNMENT LEAVES VULNERABLE PATIENTS IN THE LURCH

The Minns Labor Government is abandoning NSW's most vulnerable as more than 200 of the state's 260 psychiatrists prepare to resign amid a fractured pay dispute. This implosion of the mental health system will leave people in desperate need – including those at risk of self-harm or harming others – without the care they urgently require.

While NSW grapples with the biggest mental health crisis in decades, Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson is holidaying overseas. This comes as the government has resorted to posting helpline numbers on social media.

In the shadow of the Bondi Junction coronial inquest, Labor's response to this crisis is nothing short of shameful. Instead of resolving the situation, they've doubled down on failed "efficiency pilot" schemes and dragged the matter into industrial arbitration – a process that will leave the system in chaos for months.

The Minns Labor Government promised industrial harmony yet all we see are industrial dispute after industrial dispute across the public sector, with no leadership or solutions in sight. The government's so-called "mutual gains bargaining" has become a cruel joke, forcing psychiatrists to endure untenable working conditions while patients suffer the consequences.

Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations Damien Tudehope said the impending resignation of over 200 of the State's 260 psychiatrists is yet another sign of the massive failure of Labor's so-called 'mutual gains bargaining' system.

"Having blown the budget giving their friends in the NSW Teachers Federation a massive multi-billion pay rise, there is no money left in the kitty. Labor's idea of 'mutual gains bargaining' is a new wages cap of 3.5% for 2024-25 and compliance with unilateral efficiency savings," Mr Tudehope said.

Shadow Minister for Mental Health Robyn Preston said the State's mental health system is in crisis. Rose Jackson spoke in November of her optimism that no resignations would take place.

"Now, with over 200 resignations looming, she's on holiday, leaving the biggest mental health crisis in NSW's history in the hands of Minister Harrison. This is leadership failure at its worst," Ms Preston said.

Shadow Minister for Health Kellie Sloane said the implosion of the mental health system in NSW is happening in the shadow of the Bondi Junction coronial inquest, where support for those with acute mental health issues will come under scrutiny.

“Labor must fix this mess as a matter of urgency – not just for the sake of the psychiatrists but importantly for the patients and their families and the broader community, who are all at risk if a solution is not brokered,” Ms Sloane said.

Shadow Minister for Regional Health Gurmeh Singh said regional communities are being left behind once again, with the Minns Labor Government failing to secure the mental health services they desperately need.

“This mass resignation of psychiatrists will have devastating consequences for vulnerable people in the bush who rely on these critical services,” Mr Singh said.

Premier Chris Minns himself has admitted the care provided to vulnerable people will decrease, yet his government continues to waste time and deflect blame onto the psychiatrists’ union, ASMOF. It’s a classic Labor tactic: when they can’t solve a problem, they point the finger elsewhere.

NSW is worse off under the Minns Labor Government.

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