



**Mark Speakman**

Leader of the Opposition

**Robyn Preston**

Shadow Minister for Mental Health  
and Medical Research

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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20 January 2025

### **MINNS GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO IGNORE NEEDS OF STATE'S MOST VULNERABLE**

NSW is grappling with the biggest mental health crisis in decades, with more than 200 staff specialist psychiatrists set to resign tomorrow, leaving a large hole in the state's psychiatric health workforce.

More than 200 of the state's staff specialist psychiatrists have resigned effective from Tuesday 21 January, over an ongoing pay dispute with the Minns Labor Government.

The NSW Government has confirmed that 30-40% of staff specialist psychiatrist positions are already unfilled. Meanwhile, 80% of the state's trainee psychiatrists have indicated they plan to leave the NSW health system.

Leader of the NSW Opposition Mark Speakman said tomorrow's mass resignation will have devastating and wide-ranging impacts for people with acute and critical mental health care needs, their families and their carers.

"Here we have a situation where more than 200 of the state's psychiatrists feel so undervalued that they have no choice but to hand in their resignation," Mr Speakman said.

"The mass resignations combined with the existing workforce shortages of psychiatrists will be dire.

"Patients will have to seek urgent care from other health providers and emergency departments, which are already stressed and at capacity. We will also see people ending up in the judicial system because they can't access mental health care.

"The Minns Labor Government has abandoned patients in the mental health system and those that care for them.

"All this is against a backdrop of widespread industrial chaos and budget cuts in the health care system."

Shadow Minister for Mental Health Robyn Preston said NSW is in the grip of a critical retention crisis, with 30-40% of public psychiatrist positions already unfilled because of a workforce exodus.

"Labor's solution to the mass resignations of psychiatrists is to have taxpayers fund casual contractors (locums) to fill the gaps, at a cost of up to \$3,050 a day plus expenses per contractor.

"That's around three times the salary of a NSW Health psychiatrist. This is simply unsustainable.

“The Minns Labor Government has sent a clear message to those working in our mental health system that they can’t manage their needs or those of patients, their families and the wider community.

“After 15 months of failed negotiations it’s time for the Minns Government to sort this mess out.”

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