

NURSES — INDUSTRIAL ACTION

**682. Ms C.M. ROWE to the Minister for Health:**

I refer to the McGowan government's commitment to supporting healthcare workers across our state. Can the minister update the house on the progress of the negotiations between the state government and the Australian Nursing Federation in delivering historic nurse-to-patient ratios and a fair and generous wages offer?

**Ms A. SANDERSON replied:**

I thank the member for Belmont for the question. I would also like to take the opportunity to personally thank the WA healthcare workforce for its critical role throughout our state, supporting our community, and particularly for its lifesaving work during the pandemic. The whole system has worked together tremendously to support our community through COVID. The state government has been working closely with the Australian Nursing Federation for some time now, including more recently in the Industrial Relations Commission. As those negotiations continued, the government asked the ANF to consider calling off its industrial action so that we could come to an agreement for nurses.

I am pleased to update the house that this morning agreement was reached with the ANF to call off all industrial action and to present the state government's final offer to its membership. This is a new offer, presented this morning and agreed to in principle by the ANF. This is a very good offer. It is an offer that provides a detailed commitment to nurse and midwife-to-patient ratios, including babies, to ensure that midwives can manage their workloads. It is an offer that provides for a responsible and reasonable wages offer, and allowances for experienced nurses to support them in the training of new graduates and, importantly, the \$3 000 cost-of-living payment.

These allowances for our more senior nurses are an important initiative that recognises the mentoring role and the greater responsibilities of experienced nurses and midwives as we bring new graduates into our system. This offer will support WA Health to grow our own and attract and retain experienced nursing staff into our system. This pay offer is part of the state's wages policy and is one of the most generous in the nation. The allowances, wages and conditions for Western Australian nurses are now very competitive with other states and territories. I want to thank the Australian Nursing Federation and the Department of Health for their work on coming to this point in the negotiations. I look forward to the membership ballot outcome and the registration of the new agreement.