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## **Reconnect – bringing nurses back to work**

Returning to the wards after a decade away from the nursing profession is something that St George Hospital neonatal nurse Vicki Anderson highly recommends.

After a 10-year break on the front-line where she worked as a training and development manager at the NSW Nurses' Association, Ms Anderson has re-entered the workforce through the Reconnect Program.

She has noticed some changes in the industry since her return to nursing, including new medications and medical equipment. But the basic nursing care is still the same.

"Nurses today are highly skilled and work cohesively in multidisciplinary teams of doctors and allied health professionals to provide quality healthcare.

"Teamwork and communication are essential in caring for patients, and it's certainly encouraging to see that this aspect of the job has remained at the forefront of healthcare delivery," Ms Anderson said.

"I have always been an advocate for clinical teaching and take great pride in supporting and sharing my knowledge with new nursing graduates and student midwives who have an interest in caring for premature and critically ill babies," she said.

Ms Anderson brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Special Care Nursery at St George Hospital.

She started her nursing career caring for premature and critically ill babies at St Margaret's Hospital, Darlinghurst in 1970, and has worked in Special Care Nurseries at St Mary's Hospital in London and Fairfield Hospital; and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, Camperdown.

"The nursing profession provides many opportunities, and I'm extremely grateful to the nursing management at St George Hospital, for the support and guidance they have provided to assist me in my return to front-line nursing," she said.

St George Hospital Director of Nursing and Midwifery Services, Vicki Manning, supports the call for nurses to return to the public hospital system.

"The Reconnect Program is an excellent opportunity for qualified nurses to return to the system and upgrade their skills over time.

"As anyone who has spent time working in the profession would know, nursing is more than just a job. It is a calling that requires an enormous amount of skill, dedication and caring," Ms Manning said.

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**South Eastern Sydney Local Health District**  
**Media contact: Maxine Brennan 02 9113 2601 or 0413 028 776**

The Reconnect Program offers a 13-week structured program for registered and enrolled nurses wishing to re-enter the nursing workforce. The program is offered anytime throughout the year to successful applicants and includes self managed learning packages, structured orientation and clinical skills assessment.

The program is open for currently registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses who are not working in any nursing position or who have not been working for more than one year.

For further details or to register your interest, phone 1800 330 933.

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**Media contact: Maxine Brennan 02 9113 2601 or 0413 028 776**  AUSTRALIA – providing expert health advice 24 hours a day to NSW residents – Tel. 1800 022 222