

9 November 2018

Mersey Community Hospital Industrial Action Escalates - Theatre Staff Postpone Elective Procedures

Media Doorstop:

When: TODAY, Friday 9 November 2018
Where: Outside Mersey Community Hospital Main Entrance
Time: 2:00pm
Who: Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary
and ANMF Theatre Representative

Members of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) working at the Mersey Community Hospital, will today escalate their industrial action by postponing non-urgent elective surgery. This action is in pursuit of a competitive offer from the Tasmanian Government for public sector nurses and midwives as part of ongoing enterprise agreement negotiations.

The ANMF Tasmanian Branch entered good faith negotiations with the Tasmanian Government on 31 May this year and to date have not been able to negotiate a fair and reasonable outcome for members.

“The key concern for members relates to the disregard that the Tasmanian Government have shown to nurses and midwives by not negotiating in good faith,” said ANMF Branch Secretary Emily Shepherd.

“Members at the Mersey Community Hospital Theatre, along with nurses and midwives across the State, believe that the Tasmanian Government must urgently recognise the current workforce and their significant goodwill before it has an increasingly dire impact on the ability to retain and recruit.”

“The Tasmanian Government relies upon Theatre nurses at the Mersey Community Hospital to reach their elective surgery target, yet to date they have refused to negotiate a competitive package to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of highly skilled Theatre nurses for the future.”

“Retention and recruitment of trained Theatre nurses is an ongoing priority, and this will become a significant challenge if the Tasmanian Government stick to their wage policy of a 2% increase which will ultimately see Tasmanian nurses and midwives become the worst paid in the country,” said Ms Shepherd.

“ANMF members are fed up with the Tasmanian Government relying on them to prop up a severely underfunded health service. This, combined with lack of action to implement an improved staffing model (which was agreed upon in 2016), ongoing challenges regarding recruitment, and lack of a workforce plan to address projected nursing and midwifery shortages in the future is causing low morale and a feeling of dejection among staff.”

“The Tasmanian Government cannot afford to disregard nurses and midwives any longer. As the largest health professional group within the Tasmanian Health Service, the Tasmanian Government is currently, and will continue to, rely upon nurses and midwives to deliver public health services into the future. If this is the case, they must invest in the nursing and midwifery professions, and they must invest now.”

Future nursing and midwifery shortages across Australia are dire with a projected shortage of 123,000 by 2030. However, research also indicates that with investment in recruitment and retention, this figure could potentially be reduced to 45,000 by 2030.

“Members have had enough, they are prepared to stand up, and will stand up for safe and quality patient care and to ensure there are sustainable nursing and midwifery professions for the future. They will continue to take action until their concerns are addressed,” said Ms Shepherd.

“End”

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