

31 May 2019

## Members at North West Regional Hospital hold vigil for state of health care in Tasmania

<<UPDATED BREAKING NEWS INCLUDED>>

### Vigil

**When:** TODAY, Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019

**Time:** 3.00pm – 3.30pm

**Where:** North West Regional Hospital, side of front entrance

### Media Doorstop

**When:** TODAY, Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019

**Time:** 3.30pm – 3.45pm

**Where:** North West Regional Hospital, side of front entrance

**Who:** ANMF Branch Secretary Emily Shepherd, ANMF officials and member representatives.

This afternoon, Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May, nurses and midwives in the north west of the state will stand alongside concerned community members to hold a vigil for Tasmania's health system. Being held at the North West Regional Hospital, this action is in a bid to show the Tasmanian Government that enough is enough, and something must be done to secure the future of health care in the state. This event follows similar actions held in Hobart and Launceston over recent weeks where three hundred plus health professionals and concerned community members rallied together.

“For members of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) this event is just one more in a series of actions over the past twelve months. They are steadfast in their view that without an improved wages and conditions package from the Tasmanian Government, the future of the health system will be at risk,” said ANMF Branch Secretary Emily Shepherd.

“We continue to hear harrowing accounts daily from our members about patients who have experienced avoidable adverse outcomes because the state of the health system remains inadequate. These nurses and midwives should not have to face these conditions at the hands of a incompetent Tasmanian Government.”

“As advocates for their patients, nurse and midwives, despite being exhausted, have remained proactive in providing solutions to the health crisis. However, such solutions presented to the Tasmanian Government during initial stages of the enterprise bargaining process over twelve months ago, have not been actioned or even acknowledged. In fact, since these conversations started, Tasmanian nurses have become the lowest paid in Australia,” said Ms Shepherd.

“It is now more apparent than ever that the Tasmanian Government have no regard for facts, figures and evidence-based research. Despite being faced with information that clearly indicate that the time to invest in these health professions is now, they continue to bury their heads in the sand.”

“By 2025 the predicted shortage of nurses and midwives across Australia is 85,000 yet despite being in power for five years, the Tasmanian Government is still without a plan to ensure the future of nursing and midwifery in the state, let alone staff the increase in beds that the Minister has promised.”

“Nurses and midwives, despite being exhausted are frequently being called on to do overtime and double shifts to keep patients safe. This is costing the Government over 15 million dollars a year but still they will not implement an improved workload model. Instead, our members have daily concerns for their future and the future of their patients. There is a real worry that community members could be at risk simply because there are not enough nurses and midwives to care for them.”

“Ultimately, the Tasmanian Government is not only disrespecting the importance of these professions by not tabling an offer that shows respect for nurses and midwives, they are also showing disrespect to those Tasmanian’s needing access to lifesaving services provided by nurses, and midwives,” said Ms Shepherd.

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**<<UPDATED BREAKING NEWS>>**

## **Cuts to services in Burnie and other North West areas**

In a change proposal received by ANMF members in March this year the Tasmanian Health Service proposed to consolidate rehabilitation services to the Mersey Community Hospital. This would result in the current rehabilitation service comprising of eight rehabilitation beds and the multidisciplinary team of nursing and allied health staff, being removed from the North West Regional Hospital.

“As a result, reduced accessibility to the service would occur for the elderly, as well as people living with disabilities or impaired mobility in and around Burnie, the far North West, and the West Coast,” said ANMF Branch Secretary Emily Shepherd.

The ANMF have written to the Minister for Health, Michael Ferguson on behalf members detailing the detrimental impact this change would have on the community.

“In our correspondence we have asked the Minister to clarify why there has been a shift away from the Department of Health and Human Services June 2015 publication of the *Delivering Safe and Sustainable Clinical Services* (also known as the White Paper) document, detailing that the level four North West Regional Hospital rehabilitation service would remain at this level but with enhanced subacute specialist rehabilitation services provided through the addition of the same services at the Mersey Community Hospital.”

“To date the ANMF are yet to receive a response from the Minister despite being quoted in the early stages of the change proposal stating that there would be some acute rehabilitation beds in Burnie, but now all acute rehabilitation beds will be re-located the Mersey Community Hospital.”

Why is the Minister now walking away from his promises? What will he be doing to address the issues of access, transport, and accommodation? The uncertainty is taking a toll on the dedicated team who do not know what their future employment will be. The ANMF call on the Minister to sit down and meet with members to discuss the real and actual impact of this change,” said Ms Shepherd.

**ANMF Branch Secretary Emily Shepherd along with nursing members, will be available at the media doorstep from 3.30pm today to discuss the issues facing the state’s health system and this latest breaking news.**

“End”

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