

# ANMF COVID-19 Newsflash: Healthscope Employer response

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) wrote to Healthscope management to seek an update on information in relation to your workplace and their response to the current Omicron COVID-19 situation in Tasmania. Specifically, the ANMF has asked the following questions: in *italics*, and response from your employer in **bold**.

Please note that this is the information that your employer has provided us, **if the answers below are contradictory to what you are experiencing, please advise the ANMF via our member support team so we can take further action with the facility.**

1. *Could you please provide details on the strategies implemented to reduce transmission of the Omicron strain in your facility/facilities? Or alternatively, please feel free to provide a copy of your outbreak management plan.*

**There are currently a range of strategies in place to minimise the risk of COVID within the workplace including ensuring all staff, VMO's, contractors and visitors are vaccinated, visitor restrictions and the use of appropriate PPE. We are also screening all day case and overnight admissions, screening of all ED presentations, RAT testing on all ED presentations, RAT testing on all day cases, and RAT and PCR testing on all overnight admissions. All staff, VMO's, contractors and visitors are also required to completed Healthscope's screening app prior to entering the building.**

2. *Can you confirm that you have sufficient PPE and hand sanitizer to allow staff, and patients, to be kept safe during this pandemic (particularly if there were to be an outbreak at your facility)?*

**Yes, we currently have good supplies available and these are reviewed regularly.**

3. *Have staff been fit tested for N95 masks? If no, when is this to occur and what are the interim safety measures that will be established while staff are waiting for fit testing?*

**The majority of staff in critical areas have been fit tested, and we have further fit testing scheduled for Thursday 27 and Friday 28 January. In the interim, staff not tested are focused on fit checking on the advice of our Infectious Disease Physician.**

4. *What payments or access to special leave will be granted for staff who are required to isolate pending getting access to a COVID test and obtaining the subsequent result? Noting that access to testing is now significantly delayed.*

**Where employees require PCR testing they are entitled to 1 day of paid testing leave. We are working closely with pathology providers to ensure the prioritisation of health care workers results.**

5. *In the instance that staff are required to receive a third COVID booster dose, will there be access to additional special paid leave/time to attend a booster appointment? If a staff member has an adverse reaction to the booster, will paid leave cover this time as well?*

**Many of the staff have already received a booster dose. We offered two pop-up COVID booster vaccination clinics to staff on site last year with high attendance rates both days. Where employees have an adverse reaction they are able to access their leave.**

6. *Are there any additional leave (over and above personal leave) arrangements available to staff who, not being unwell themselves, need to self-isolate or care for someone (e.g. child) with COVID-19 that will be provided?*

**Where employees are required to isolate due to a work related exposure, they have access to paid special leave. Where it is not work related employees are able to access their personal leave or supported to access the Government's paid pandemic leave.**

7. *Will you be providing Rapid Antigen Testing for staff members? If so, what will the process be for access to these tests?*

**Since late last year HPH has been providing a drive through clinic for staff to be RAT and PCR tested.**

8. *Are you willing to commit to presumptive workers compensation if a staff member becomes unwell, after a workplace exposure, with COVID-19?*

**Where employees contract COVID through work they are supported to lodge a workers' compensation claim.**

9. *If a number of staff become unwell (or are not unwell but are required to isolate pending test results) with COVID-19, what plan is in existence to maintain safe staffing levels?*

**We are fortunate that we don't currently have many staff absent but we have plans in place to ensure we staff the hospital appropriately to activity and review as per our Operational Plan which provides for these contingencies.**

10. Are you employing additional administration staff to deal with access and entry to your facility and any extra record keeping that is required?

**We have had additional staff at times to manage this as required and will continue to ensure there are appropriate staffing levels for this work when required.**

11. Confirmation of your support for additional 15-minute hydration and comfort break due to workloads and working while in PPE.

**We are in regular discussion with our employees regarding all work health safety needs and will continue to work through any concerns with them.**

12. Could you please provide a copy of your staffing strategy and any staffing contingency plans.

**We have an Operational Plan in place which addresses all scenarios and which is assessed and reviewed regularly as it is constantly changing. As it does contain commercially sensitive information I cannot provide it but am happy to try to answer any specific questions you may have.**

**The ANMF Tasmanian Branch is 8000 plus members strong! Supporting nurses, midwives, and care workers as the only union in Tasmania employing nurses and care workers to represent members. This is why our Organisers and Member Support Team are uniquely positioned to understand your experiences, represent you in your workplace, and offer industrial advice that's relevant to you.**

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact our Member Support Team via email on [membersupport@anmftas.org.au](mailto:membersupport@anmftas.org.au). Email is the preferred and fastest way of contacting the team. Alternatively, you can phone (03) 6223 6777.

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Authorised by Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary  
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