

ANMF COVID-19 Newsflash: Hobart Eye Surgeons

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

Please note that this is the information that has been provided to us, *if the answer below is unsatisfactory or you believe it is incorrect, please advise the ANMF via our member support team so we can raise further questions of your employer.*

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.*
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)?*
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?*
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.*
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?*
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?*
7. *Will you be providing Rapid Antigen Testing for staff members? If so, what will the process be for access to these tests?*
8. *Are you willing to commit to presumptive workers compensation if a staff member becomes unwell, after a workplace exposure, with COVID-19?*
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?*

10. *Are you employing additional administration staff to deal with access and entry to your facility and any extra record keeping that is required?*
11. *Confirmation of your support for additional 15-minute hydration and comfort break due to workloads and working while in PPE.*
12. *Could you please provide a copy of your staffing strategy and any staffing contingency plans?*

Hobart Eye Surgeons did not answer any specific questions but replied as follows.

“Thank you for the correspondence from Ms Shepherd. At Hobart Eye Surgeons, we too are concerned about the welfare of our staff, both generally and in respect of COVID19 specifically.

On review of your letter, I am pleased to advise that all measures are in place to both mitigate the risk of infection in the workplace and support staff who do become infected. Those measures are set out in both our *COVID Safety Plan* and our *Outbreak Management Plan*.

Our measures go beyond those required at law, both in respect of our mitigation strategies as well as our support strategies.

We thank the ANMF for their ongoing commitment to their membership.”

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. Email is the preferred and fastest way of contacting the team. Alternatively, you can phone (03) 6223 6777.

Authorised by Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary
2 February 2022