


## ANMF NEWSFLASH

# Mental Health Short Stay Unit

## Response to Correspondence Received

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) wrote to the group director responsible for the Mental Health Short Stay Unit (MHSSU) on 18 August 2022, a response was received from the MHSSU Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) David Crofts on 13 September 2022. A summary of the concerns raised and responses to same are as follows.

1. **Use of agency nurses to fill vacancies** – use of agency nurses will continue until permanent positions are filled. Extended contracts will be offered to nurses to achieve as much consistency as possible. An additional seven day per week Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) position has been created for six months to assist in stabilising, educating, and supporting MHSSU nurses.
2. **Fair access to additional shifts** – overtime is advertised via a page service through the roster office. Nurses are asked to call the roster office to accept a shift.
3. **Financial penalties for agency workers who accept permanent contracts** – the Tasmanian Health Service will pay fees to agencies who lose nurses due to permanent appointment within the service. Additional charges will be considered on a case-by-case basis through a review process.
4. **Agency nurses automatically moved from Grade 3-4 to Grade 5** – the NUM denies this is occurring. If agency nurses are not suitable for appointment to Grade 5, they will remain at Grade 3-4. All agency nurses who start in the MHSSU commence as Grade 3-4.
5. **Addressing workforce challenges** – Statewide Mental Health Services (SMHS) attended a conference on the Gold Coast with a booth targeting nurses who might be interested in moving to Tasmania. The ANMF are told there was ‘considerable interest’, which will now be followed up by SMHS.

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6. **Roster Delays** – the NUM is unaware that rosters have been coming out late. Payment of penalties, as per the award will be applied in all circumstances where there has been an Award breach. Penalties are not payable when a breach is a result of roster requests (including swaps) made by the employee.
  7. **Meal breaks not relieved** – the NUM and CNC are unaware this is occurring. If you are unable to take your breaks, please notify them (preferably in advance) to see if alternative arrangements can be made to facilitate your meal break. Nurses are entitled to claim overtime when not relieved for a break.
  8. **Workplace Flexibility Agreement** - work is underway with human resources, completion is expected ‘as soon as possible’.
  9. **Additional 1800hrs – 0200hrs shift for meal break relief at Mistral Place and Tolosa Street** – management assert this ‘is not a new position, it comes from an existing position to cover meal breaks at Tolosa and Mistral Place and has been reallocated ... to provide additional cover to MHSSU’.
  10. **Enrolled Nurse (EN) positions** – for consistency of care there will be no change to EN positions within the unit.
  11. **MHSSU working outside of the agreed Model of Care (MoC), admitting patients that fall within the ‘exclusion criteria’** – MoC has been ‘temporarily changed due to impacts of COVID-19 and a decision by service to admit COVID-19 – affected mental health consumers. This has resulted in longer lengths of stay for those with more acute needs. Efforts are made to place patients in the most appropriate unit. Needs are assessed in the MHSSU if higher acuity patients are admitted, including assessing the need for additional resources, as required, to ensure the teams safety.

The ANMF would like to hear from members who would like to discuss any, or all, of the above points. Please contact Southern Organiser Jenna Bowling [Jenna.Bowling@anmftas.org.au](mailto:Jenna.Bowling@anmftas.org.au) to arrange a follow up members meeting.

*At this stage the Adult Community Mental Health Service Acute Care Team service does not have an ANMF Workplace Representative (delegate). An active workplace delegate can assist in actioning and resolving issues. If you would like more information or are interested in filling this role, please click here <https://anmftas.org.au/reps/> or contact Jenna.*



**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  
14 September 2022