

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Launceston General Hospital

Ward 3D - Step 1 Grievance Update

On Tuesday 10 January 2023, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) received the Tasmanian Health Service (THS) North response to the ANMF Step 1 Grievance raised on behalf of members on 22 December 2022. A summary of the THS response (*italics*) is provided as follows (in order of the concerns raised by ANMF):

1. *There is an acknowledgement that the current workloads are impacting the 3D team, notably the impact COVID-19 requirements and related staff absences.*
2. *Currently there are low, minimal vacancies due to contractual commencement dates. 1.00 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Registered Nurse (RN) Grade 3-4 - fixed term Maternity leave, Job Card pending for permanent transfer from RHH. - 0.98 FTE Registered Nurse Grade 3-4 fixed term pending recruitment.*
3. *Skill mix: Over 50 per cent of the 3D Nursing workforce is above Grade 3 Year 4 level with a high number of employees having post graduate qualifications in comparison to other inpatient medical wards.*
4. *Under the initial benchmarking completed for 3D when the ward was newly established, there was a higher FTE allocation to the Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC) role, to provide a greater presence of clinical leadership compared to the other medical wards. This FTE was counted in direct care hours as per the current NHpPD business rules.*
5. *THS reported not being aware of the negative stigma attached to ward 3D from other colleagues within the health service. Employees are urged to seek support from the Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) or EAP if they feel a negative stigma associated with their ward is having an impact on them. **(Note the ANMF***

will support and assist members to do this if and when required, we would like to work positively with you and your NUM to assist in these discussions). THS detailed a commitment to a positive culture, access to the Studer Group program to support this, with further dates for sessions to occur in 2023 and the re-engagement with the Migrant Resource Centre, which was to be engaged in 2022 but was postponed due to COVID-19.

In relation to the direct solutions raised by the ANMF to mitigate workloads the THS have responded as follows:

1. *Consideration to increasing Enrolled Nurses (ENs) possibly filling an RN line for an interim period to assist with getting numbers on the floor is a matter for the Nurses Award PART VIII – Consultation and change. Nurse and Midwives (Tasmanian State Service) Agreement 2019, Clause 22. Skill Mix ENs and RN. However, we are fully committed to upskill and support employees and support the plan to introduce a Clinical Coach model on Ward 3D. It is anticipated this will be x1 Clinical Coach working between 1000 - 1830hrs, 7 days a week, a total of 1.47 FTE. These positions will need to be advertised and appointed based on merit.*

The ANMF considers this a positive development and will consult further with members.

2. *Implementation of supernumerary Associate Nurse Unit Managers (ANUMs) is again a matter for the Nurses Award PART VIII – Consultation and change: Workload Management: Nurse and Midwives (Tasmanian State Service) Agreement 2019, Clause 17. Associate Nurse Unit Manager.*

The THS reference of clause 17 suggests that they will not act outside the minimum Enterprise Agreement (EA) requirement. Whereby the ANUM role was introduced as 'FTE Neutral'. In the current round of EA negotiations, the ANMF has claimed, and will advocate for, supernumerary ANUM FTE.

3. *In discussion with the Nursing Director of Critical and Acute Inpatient Services, we continue to monitor data noting Ward 3D became fully operational in December 2021. It would be beneficial to undertake benchmarking reflective of the 2022 / 2023 financial year activity in line with the Nursing Hours per Patient Day (NHpPD) Business rules.*

Suggestion that re-benchmarking would not occur before the end of June this year.

- 4. In respect to the ANMFs proposal of increased Assistants in Nursing (AINs), this would be additional to any current benchmarking, requiring a separate business case and outside my current delegations. In addition, the EA would require a trial to be undertaken to increase AINs furthermore creating permanent positions over and above current benchmarked nursing hours. A trial of a such proposal at this time would add additional pressure to the staff so I suggest a trial would be better conducted in a more established team.*

The ANMF will seek further feedback from members regarding this.

- 5. While we appreciate staffing is counted at a moment in time, the majority of all permanent positions and fixed terms lines in Ward 3D are recruited to. Efforts are continually made to cover any vacancies with minimal change to skill mix and where possible, we have permanently recruited to positions whereby staff have gone on Maternity Leave or taken Leave without Pay (LWOP).*

The ANMF will seek further feedback from members regarding this.

- 6. The current data relating to patients with aggressive and behavioural challenges does not support an increase in hospital Support Officer hours.*

The ANMF will seek further feedback from members regarding this.

- 7. Any increase in pool baseline roster FTE would need to be referred to the Nursing Director Integrated Operations Centre. Additional staffing requests for Pool support are made in advance for known shortfalls, however, the unpredictability of COVID-19 and the resulting sick leave makes modelling and mapping problematic. However, safe staffing levels are always a priority on Ward 3D.*

The ANMF will seek further feedback from members regarding this.

The ANMF will now arrange a time to meet with members to see if the above response is satisfactory for resolution for the grievance. Noting the offer to introduce a clinical coach 7 days a week, in conjunction with the ANMFs' further advocacy around some of the other elements in the response, might see the grievance able to be placed in abeyance pending recruitment and trial of the clinical coach role.



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 1800 001 241.

Authorised by Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary
13 January 2023