

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Launceston General Hospital D Block High Temperature Update

On Monday 20 February 2023 the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) has requested an update from Tasmanian Health Service (THS) on progress toward mitigating the heat issues within the D block at the Launceston General Hospital (LGH). The below outlines the ANMF's concerns raised, and in italics the THS response:

1. What was the outcome of the Work Health Safety assessment, are there any recommendations?
 - *Risk of dehydration due to the overheated environment.*
 - *Lack of preparedness – accurate forecasting.*
 - *Adequate breaks to ensure rest and hydration.*
 - *Damaged window seals.*
 - *IPC COVID measures exacerbated the heat.*
2. Has the project group met and are there any recommendations and or immediate solutions that can be actioned?
 - *The project group was meeting fortnightly in the initial phase now meeting as required. Immediate actions were implemented. Heat nurse implemented to ensure adequate breaks, access to airconditioned break rooms for staff, forecasting advice through the Executive Huddle each morning as required, implementation of air purifiers to improve air circulation. Infrastructure have progressed an Initiation brief to undertake a Chiller replacement program to be completed by January 2024.*
3. Regarding Safety Reporting Learning System (SRLS), how many have been completed for heat-related issues and what mitigations have been put in place following a review of these?

- *105 SRLS have been completed to date including a number of consumer complaints and Ministerial.*
 - *Cardiac Monitoring equipment in NCCU exacerbated the heat issues.*
 - *Change Proposal pending for the relocation of Cardiac Monitoring and reconfiguration of beds capacity – approval pending.*
 - *Decreased the Chillers by 2 degrees to ensure a lower baseline temperature in the areas where there is airflow.*
 - *Air duct maintenance to be undertaken to increase efficiency when the new tint is installed, and the window frames are resealed as part of a program of works.*
4. Have you been able to identify where the 9.8 million dollars was spent, allocated in the 2018-2019 State Budget for air-conditioning upgrades?
- *Advice has been provided that the funding was spent across the State on air conditioning upgrades.*

Members have reported that the following mitigations have been proposed, however are not necessarily available or forthcoming:

5. Access to a “Heat Nurse” What is the process for getting extra staffing for when the ward/s are in high temperatures?
- *The access nurse is provided through the pool staffing process and forecasting assists to plan when a nurse will be required in the key areas.*
6. Extra Hydration breaks; how are extra hydration breaks being facilitated during these times?
- *The lecture theatre foyer has been quarantined during mealtimes for the D Block staff.*
 - *Nurse Unit Managers (NUMs)/Associate Nurse Unit Managers (ANUMs) facilitate additional breaks on a shift per shift bases or as and when required.*
 - *Staff are encouraged to take additional breaks when needed ensuring the In-charge is aware and the ward/patients are safe.*



Then further in relation to potential infrastructure upgrades, the ANMF requested details on the solution/s and a timeline for implementation of these. Specifically noting that if a solution/s cannot be procured before November this year (2023), then the ANMF will commence a process of engagement with THS North to review the Nursing Hours per Patient Day (NHpPD) in those areas affected by the seasonal heat cycle. It would be reasonable to consider an increase in baseline staffing for these areas. To this, THS have provided the following response:

- *In response to the issues identified in D-Block at the LGH, \$4 million has been allocated in January 2023 to replace eight chillers. The replacement of these chillers will improve the efficiency of the air conditioning on site and improve the reliability of the chiller plant. It is planned that this work will be completed before Summer 2023 (December).*
- *In addition to this committed funding, a review has been commissioned to provide additional short and long-term options for improve air conditioning across the LGH. The review will incorporate the Australasian Health Facility Guidelines for Pandemic Preparedness which have recently been released by the Australasian Health Infrastructure Alliance. The report is due to be finalised by June 2023.*
- *\$4 million has been allocated from remaining LGH Redevelopment Stage 1 funding to replace 8 chillers.*
- *Existing treatments, such as window tinting, and double glazing are starting to fail. Replacement of window tinting is being scheduled.*
- *Consultant Engineering Solutions Tasmania were engaged to undertake a full assessment of the air conditioning at the LGH on Friday 20 January 2023. The review is being broken into four (4) stages:*
 - *D Block, Maternity, and the chilled water system.*
 - *Northern integrated Care building (NICS) and wards 5A and 5.*
 - *The remainder of the campus, and*



- o *final completion of the condition assessments and preparation of a final assessment report.*
- *There will be interim reports delivered at the end of each stage which can be used to commence system augmentation to alleviate issues being experienced by patients and staff. The final report is scheduled for delivery in late May 2023.*

The ANMF will closely monitor the above plans to ensure the actions promised are delivered. Then as indicated above will act as required. Further updates will be provided as they come to hand.

The ANMF Tasmanian Branch is 8000 plus members strong! Supporting nurses, midwives, and care workers as the only union in Tasmania employing nurses, midwives 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
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