



## ANMF NEWSFLASH

# North West Regional Hospital Medical Ward Medical Ward including AMU and Medical C

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) met with members on Thursday 7 November 2024. At the meeting members articulated ongoing staffing and workload issues and endorsed the ANMF raising a Step 1 Grievance as per the *Tasmanian Nurses and Midwives [Tasmanian State Service] Award 2024, Part VII, Section 2: Workload Management S2013*.

The key issues that significantly impact both staff wellbeing and patient care include:

1. **Missed or Interrupted Meal Breaks:** these breaks have become routinely missed or interrupted due to workload pressures, depriving staff of essential rest.
2. **Increased Double Shifts:** staff are taking on additional shifts, which leads to fatigue and increases potential safety risks for both staff and patients.
3. **Inadequate Skill Mix:** skill levels on staff are often insufficient and may pose safety risks.
4. **Associate Nurse Unit Manager (ANUM) Hours:** ANUMs are rostered from direct care hours but are unavailable for direct care due to their administrative duties needed to run shifts safely.
5. **Establishment Concerns:** there are a number of establishment positions or part positions unable to be recruited to which are held for long term workers compensation, nurses working in other areas and maternity leave.



6. **Roster Concerns:** lack of consultation and communication with filling of short notice shifts. Members reiterate the number of nurses is not the concern as there is a willingness to source nurses, however the skill mix is a major concern. There appears to be a breakdown in communication between staffing, the After-Hours Manager (AHM) and the Medical Ward, the replacement of short-term leave appears to occur with little to no review of upcoming shifts. One example of many was senior nurse/s asked to complete a double shift which “fixes” one shift but the flow on effect for the following shifts is not considered. Allocation of weekend and night shifts is not always fair and equitable.
7. **Accessing agency Nurses:** Onerous and time-consuming requirements to source agency nurses, there have been times when contracts have been extended and the nurse in question has already left the state, other examples of contracts arriving after the start date has passed.

Members understand that the hospital may face staffing challenges; however, the current conditions now pose daily risks to both patient care and staff safety.

### **Requested Actions**

To address these unsafe conditions, members request the following actions:

1. **Immediate Staffing Review:** assess staffing levels in Medical Wards to ensure daily skill mix is reflective of safe staffing levels. Establish robust role delineation and communication for short notice shift replacement that reviews not just the shift at hand but the impact on subsequent shifts.
2. **Reduction of Double Shifts and Short-Staffed Shifts:** Develop a plan to reduce reliance on double shifts and understaffed shifts, ensuring staff can provide safe, quality care without burnout.
3. **Assurance of Meal and Rest Breaks:** commit to providing breaks as required under the Enterprise Agreement (EA) and health and safety standards.
4. **Data and Consultation for Sustainable Solutions:** consult with members and their ANMF Official to create viable solutions to staffing and workload pressures, concluding this within one week of the date of this letter. To inform this, we request data on vacancies (including duration), double shifts, agency



and overtime usage, and sick leave data for the past 12 months (broken down by hours per pay fortnight).

5. **Roster ANUM Hours as Indirect Care:** ensure that ANUM hours are rostered as indirect hours, separate from direct care hours.
6. **Employ Clinical Coaches in Indirect Care Roles:** roster clinical coaches on day shifts on weekends and public holidays and all afternoon shifts, from indirect hours, separate from direct care.
7. **Establishment Review:** review the current establishment, consider moving long term positions that are unlikely to be taken up by the incumbent to a central pool thus allowing permanent appointment to vacant positions and decreasing the use of agency nurses. Commit to filling all vacancies within 3 months or sooner and confirm this commitment within one week of the date of this letter.
8. **Confirm Authority:** review the process for accessing agency contracts – the ANMF was led to believe that establishment vacancies and agency contracts to replace establishment leave are be authorised at a local level by the Nursing Director.

The ANMF expects a written response by close of business Friday 29 November 2024, once this is received the ANMF will meet with members to discuss the response and seek direction for next steps.

**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.**

Authorised by Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary  
27 November 2024