

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Royal Hobart Hospital

Urgent Update on Proposed Cuts to RHH Clinical Trials Unit

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) has received a significant change proposal from the Tasmanian Health Service (THS), dated Monday 16 June 2025, outlining major cuts to the staffing profile of the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) Cancer and Blood Services (CaBS) Clinical Trials Unit (CTU).

Proposed Staffing Reductions Include:

- **Senior and Band 2 Administrative Assistants: 0 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)** (*Reduction of 2.0 FTE*)
- **Research Officers: 2.8 FTE** (*Reduction of 2.0 FTE*)
- **Clinical Nurse Consultant (CNC): 0.95 FTE** (*Reduction of 0.05 FTE*)
- **Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS): 2.0 FTE** (*Reduction of 1.1 FTE*)
- **Registered Nurse (RN): 1.84 FTE** (*Reduction of 3.73 FTE*)

These cuts total **9.89 FTE** and would significantly alter the unit's skill mix, reducing capacity to deliver life-saving clinical trials to Tasmanians, particularly those with rare and complex cancers.

The ANMF's Response & Member Consultation

The ANMF formally wrote to the THS Executive on **Thursday 19 June 2025**, requesting an **extension of the consultation period to Monday 23 July 2025** and urging a **pause on the proposed changes** until after the 2025 Tasmanian State Election.

Preliminary feedback from members is clear:

- Members strongly oppose the proposal in its current form.
- Members are calling for a pause to allow proper evaluation of the clinical and public health implications.

Summary of Key ANMF Concerns:

- **Questionable Cost Savings:** The proposed model removes all administrative staff but increases average FTE costs by shifting to higher-paid clinical roles. This may result in **limited true savings** while **undermining essential admin and billing support**.
- **Cuts to a Self-Funded, Revenue-Generating Unit:** The CTU is entirely **self-sustaining** through trial activity. A modest State bridging investment (~\$1M annually) could be offset by increased trial recruitment as systemic delays improve.
- **Loss of Highly Skilled Workforce:** The long-term loss of experienced research nurses and clinical trial experts is not easily recoverable. **Turnover costs are high**, and it takes months for new staff to become effective.
- **Patient Access to Trials Jeopardised:** Cutting trial capacity will **disproportionately affect Tasmanians with rare or advanced cancers**, leading to premature palliation and loss of access to global trials.
- **Damage to Reputation & Capability:** Global sponsors may classify the RHH CTU as “high risk” and remove it from future studies. Loss of institutional knowledge may take years to rebuild.



The THS's Response – 24 June 2025

The THS has **refused the request to extend consultation**, citing the CTU's **imminent financial deficit** and asserting the need for **immediate implementation** to avoid service discontinuation.

Key points from the THS response include:

- No **bridging funding** will be provided by the Department of Health.
- The CTU must remain **self-funded** with expenditure aligned to current revenue forecasts.
- **Administrative functions** will be absorbed by research officers, despite concerns this will impact efficiency.
- Redeployment pathways for affected nurses are being explored, with a focus on maintaining some trial capacity within CaBS.
- The proposal reflects **industry standards** and aims to establish a **sustainable long-term model**, despite acknowledged risks to staff and patient access.

Next Steps

The ANMF is **deeply disappointed** by this response and the refusal to extend consultation. We are now:

- Continuing to consult with affected members
- Exploring **potential industrial action**
- Considering a **formal application to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission**
- Preparing **comprehensive feedback** on the proposal to be submitted before the current consultation deadline.



We will **keep members informed** of all developments and any further action that may be taken.

Together, we will continue to advocate for safe staffing, fair consultation, and the future of clinical trials for Tasmanians.

In solidarity,

The ANMF

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 Phoebe Mansell, ANMF Tasmanian Acting Branch Secretary
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