

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Royal Hobart Hospital Ward K6 K6 West Safety Update

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) is wanting to provide K6 members with an important update regarding serious safety concerns raised by members on K6 West in relation to the potential re-presentation of a patient with complex and violent behaviours for a social admission.

Members have reported that during the patient's previous admission to K6 West:

- Multiple Code Blacks were required
- The patient caused extensive physical damage to the ward
- Staff experienced significant distress and fear for their own safety and the safety of other vulnerable paediatric patients

Members have been clear that K6 West is not an appropriate environment to safely manage a patient of this complexity. The ward is not designed, nor are paediatric nurses resourced or equipped, to manage these behaviours safely where the patient is not requiring acute medical monitoring.

The ANMF has raised these concerns with the Acting Nurse Unit Manager (NUM), K6 West, and the Assistant Director of Nursing. We are advised the concerns have been escalated as far as possible locally. While management agree K6 West is not an appropriate placement, no alternative location has been identified.

As a result, the ANMF has formally written to the Chief Executive Hospitals South advising of members' serious safety concerns and notifying the Department of the action members will take should the patient re-present.

In addition to members' rights under the Nurses and Midwives Award 2024, Section 19 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 places a clear obligation on the Department, as a *person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)*, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers and to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety.

Under the Nurses and Midwives Award 2024, Clause 3 – *Grievance and Dispute Resolution*, where a safety issue presents an imminent risk, members have the right to cease work until the risk is addressed.

The ANMF has advised that if this patient re-presents and is admitted to K6 West:

- Members will refuse to accept the patient on K6 West
- If the admission proceeds, members will transfer current patients to K6 East and other adult wards and will cease working on K6 West for the duration of the patient's stay
- This action will continue until a safe and appropriate alternative placement is provided

Members have identified the Wilfred Lopes Centre, or a similar appropriately resourced setting, as a more suitable alternative.

The ANMF has requested urgent confirmation from the Department on how this matter will be managed should the patient re-present. We will continue to keep members informed of any response or developments. If you have concerns or require support, please contact your ANMF organiser or delegate. The **ANMF will continue to advocate on members' behalf and provide updates as this progresses.**

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
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