

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Royal Hobart Hospital Mother & Baby Unit ANMF Responds to Proposed IRPU Change

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) has formally responded to the Department's Change Proposal to transition the current Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) to a proposed Intensive Residential Parenting Unit (IRPU), anticipated to commence in mid-2026.

This response was informed by member feedback received through the MBU survey and the MBU member meeting held on Wednesday 10 December 2025. The ANMF sincerely thanks all members who engaged, attended the meeting, and provided feedback to ensure member concerns were accurately represented.

While members support expanding access to services for parents and infants, serious concerns have been raised about safety, mental health care, service design, staffing, leadership, consultation, and job security. Members do not believe the proposal adequately meets the needs of the current MBU consumer cohort or reflects the complexity of care currently provided.

Key concerns raised include:

- Significant reduction in perinatal mental health capability, with no clear pathways for mothers requiring inpatient mental health care.
- Minimal to no involvement of Perinatal Infant Mental Health Services (PIMHS), creating major clinical and governance risks.
- Risk of parent–infant separation, including potential diversion to general adult mental health unit.
- Removal of the two designated mental health beds and lack of mental health-safe environments.
- Unclear service design, including “virtual beds,” operating hours, admission processes, and governance.
- Inadequate staffing and workload modelling, with proposed staffing not reflecting increased demand or acuity



- Loss of onsite leadership, including the proposed removal of an onsite Nurse Unit Manager (NUM)
- Lack of genuine consultation, with members reporting decisions were made prior to meaningful engagement
- Employment insecurity, including all current staff being required to reapply for roles with no guarantees
- Exclusion of current MBU consumers, particularly those with complex perinatal mental health needs

The ANMF has made it clear that **members do not support the proposal in its current form** and believe it represents a reduction in service, safety, and equity for vulnerable families.

The ANMF has requested a detailed written response addressing these concerns by **close of business Thursday 8 January 2026**, and continues to advocate for meaningful consultation and a model that provides safe, family-centred, and specialist perinatal care.

Further updates will be provided as they occur.

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
18 December 2025