

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Statewide Public Sector

Flexible Work Policy – ANMF Responds to Consultation Draft

On Friday 3 July 2026, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) formally responded to the Department's draft Flexible Work Policy, following extensive consultation with nurses and midwives working across the Tasmanian Public Health system.

Thank you to every member who took the time to provide feedback. Your experiences and concerns have directly informed the ANMF's response to the Department.

What Did Members Tell us?

While members support the availability of genuine workplace flexibility, there was overwhelming concern that the proposed policy, in its current form, could weaken existing workplace protections and result in inconsistent decision-making across the State.

The key concerns raised by members included:

- Too much discretion being given to individual managers, without clear or objective decision-making criteria.
- A lack of transparency about how flexible work requests will be assessed or refused.
- Inconsistent application of flexible work arrangements between managers, services and locations.
- Concern that "operational requirements" could become a blanket reason to refuse requests without genuine consideration of individual circumstances.
- No clear or independent review or appeal process where requests are declined.

- Failure to clearly reinforce the employer's obligation under the Award that flexible work requests must not be unreasonably refused.
- Concerns that existing approved flexible work arrangements could be reviewed, varied or withdrawn without sufficient justification.
- Significant anxiety for staff with caring responsibilities, those returning from parental leave, employees with disabilities and those managing their own health and wellbeing.
- Recognition that flexible work arrangements are essential for workforce wellbeing, retention, recruitment and keeping experienced nurses and midwives working in Tasmania's Public Health system.

What has the ANMF Raised with the Department?

In its formal response, the ANMF advised that it **cannot support the policy in its current form.**

The ANMF has requested that the Department:

- Strengthen protections for employees seeking flexible work.
- Clearly state that requests must not be unreasonably refused, consistent with the Award.
- Introduce transparent assessment criteria.
- Require documented reasons where requests are declined.
- Establish a fair and independent review process.
- Provide stronger protections for existing approved flexible work arrangements.
- Ensure consistent statewide application of the policy; and,
- Release all supporting guides and documents before consultation concludes.

The ANMF also raised concerns that aspects of the draft policy may result in discriminatory outcomes for some employees. As a result, the draft policy has been referred to the Anti-Discrimination Commission for independent review.

Consultation Must Continue

The ANMF has reminded the Department that consultation must occur in accordance with the Consultation and Change provisions of the *Nurses and Midwives (Tasmania State Service) Award 2025*.



The ANMF considers the current consultation represents Stage One of the Award consultation process and has requested that the policy does not proceed until members' concerns have been properly addressed.

What's Next?

The ANMF has requested a formal response from the Department by **Friday 17 July 2026** addressing the concerns and recommendations raised in our submission.

We will continue to keep members informed as consultation progresses and will advocate strongly to ensure any Flexible Work Policy supports — not undermines — the rights and protections already contained within the Award.

Thank you again to everyone who contributed feedback. Your voice continues to shape our advocacy on this important issue.

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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