

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Public Sector

The ANMF Pushes Back on Fatigue Policy That Doesn't Address Staffing Problems

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) has formally lodged further feedback with the Department of Health on its proposed Fatigue Management Procedure, after it was again circulated during Public Sector Negotiations - following the ANMF's claims relating to burnout, fatigue and work health and safety.

While we support measures that improve safety and reduce fatigue, we have made it clear that nurses, midwives and Assistants in Nursing (AINs) cannot carry responsibility for managing fatigue when chronic understaffing remains a daily reality.

Our concerns are simple:

- Staff are already working excessive overtime and double shifts because vacancies remain unfilled.
- Many workplaces continue to rely on overtime to maintain services.
- Fatigue cannot be separated from workforce shortages and unsafe staffing levels.
- Any fatigue policy must recognise that the Department controls staffing levels, recruitment processes, rosters and workloads.

You cannot manage fatigue without fixing the system.

The ANMF has told the Department that if it genuinely wants staff and managers to comply with a fatigue management procedure, then the systems that support the procedure must also be fit for purpose.



That means:

- Vacancies must be filled quickly.
- Recruitment and appointment processes must be efficient and timely.
- Rosters must be built around safe staffing, not ongoing vacancies.
- Overtime and double shifts should only be used as a genuine last resort.
- Managers must have the resources and staffing available to implement fatigue controls.
- Workloads and patient demand must be matched with an adequately staffed workforce.

The ANMF's position is straightforward: it is unreasonable to expect staff and managers to effectively manage fatigue when the underlying causes of fatigue are not being addressed.

We have urged the Department's leadership to ensure the workforce, recruitment and staffing systems are set up for success before expecting compliance with a procedure that may be impossible to implement in understaffed workplaces.

What This Means for Members

Every nurse, midwife and AIN knows that fatigue is more than simply feeling tired. Fatigue affects decision-making, concentration, patient safety and your own health and wellbeing.

The ANMF will continue to advocate for:

- Better staffing levels.
- Faster recruitment and vacancy filling.
- Reduced reliance on overtime and double shifts.
- Safer rosters and workloads.
- Genuine consultation with frontline staff.

Policies alone do not fix fatigue. Safe staffing, effective workforce planning and properly resourced services do.



The ANMF will continue holding the Department accountable for creating workplaces where fatigue can be managed in practice, not just on paper.

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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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