

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Public Sector

The ANMF Raises Concerns About the Rostering Improvement Project – Stage 2

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) has formally raised concerns with the Department of Health regarding the Workforce Performance Turnaround Plan and Best Practice Rostering Stage 2 Program following feedback from Nurse Unit Managers (NUMs), Midwife Unit Managers (MUMs) and members across the North West and North.

Members have reported that the project is creating significant additional workload through the required completion of monthly workforce planning tools, reporting requirements and Monthly Accountability Meetings, despite many of the workforce challenges being outside managers' control. Concerns include ongoing recruitment delays, workforce shortages, vacancies, attraction and retention difficulties, and approval processes that managers cannot influence.

The ANMF has also raised concerns about feedback from members regarding the consultant leading aspects of the project. Members have reported concerns that there appears to be a limited understanding of the realities of providing safe patient care and maintaining safe workplaces while managing increasingly complex workforce pressures. Further, managers have queried the rationale for the project and if limited improvement in the reporting metrics would be used against them through performance management.

Particularly concerning are reports that managers have been encouraged to focus on reducing labour costs and staffing levels, including suggestions that staffing be reduced to minimum Nursing Hours per Patient Day (NHpPD) levels to achieve financial savings. The ANMF has made it clear that NHpPD requirements are minimum staffing protections and should never be used as a target where patient acuity, workload, safety or quality care require additional staffing.



What Did the Department Say?

In response, the Deputy Secretary, Health Service Operations, advised that the Department shares the ANMF's commitment to patient safety, workforce wellbeing and industrial compliance. The Department stated that the program was designed to support managers, not create additional workload or make them responsible for broader workforce issues.

Importantly, the Department stated that **it does not support strategies that breach industrial instruments, compromise safe staffing arrangements or place patient care at risk**. It also acknowledged that many issues affecting workforce performance, including recruitment delays and workforce shortages, are outside the control of individual managers and should be escalated to executives for action.

The Department further advised that the Workforce Performance Turnaround Plans are intended to help managers identify and escalate barriers, rather than be used as a punitive performance management tool. It also committed to improving communication about the program and ensuring managers understand available escalation pathways.

The ANMF's Position

The ANMF welcomes the Department's assurance that patient safety, workforce wellbeing and industrial compliance are non-negotiable. However, members' experiences suggest there remains a gap between the stated intent of the project and how it is being experienced in practice, in particular with respect to workloads. Given the feedback from the Deputy Secretary, the ANMF advise that workloads created by this project are documented via email to your nursing director with a copy to the Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery. Should your workloads not be explored and addressed please contact the ANMF Member Support Team for further advice and assistance.

The ANMF will continue to monitor the project closely and advocate for nurses and midwives to ensure that workforce initiatives support safe staffing, safe workloads and quality patient care, rather than increase workload or place unreasonable expectations on managers. In addition, support for NUM and MUM's (e.g. admin and business support) will continue to an advocacy priority at the Public Sector Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EA) negotiations.



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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