

ANMF NEWSFLASH

LAUNCESTON GENERAL HOSPITAL AT CRITICAL CAPACITY

The ANMF Takes Urgent Action Over Unsafe Staffing and Overcensus

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) has lodged an urgent application with the Tasmanian Industrial Commission (TIC) and escalated concerns to the Health Minister regarding the deteriorating situation at the Launceston General Hospital (LGH), following significant pressure within the Emergency Department (ED), and reports of wards continuing to work short staffed as well as wards being placed over their industrially agreed bed numbers.

Wards Operating Above Agreed Bed Numbers

The ANMF was advised that Ward 6D on 3R exceeded its industrially agreed 26 beds, with a 27th patient accommodated in an office. The patient was reported to be elderly and confused. No additional nursing staff were provided despite the additional patient.

The ANMF was also advised that Ward 5D exceeded its industrially agreed 32 beds, with a 33rd patient accommodated in the treatment room.

The staffing arrangements for 32 beds on 5D and 26 Beds on 6D have been industrially agreed for a reason, Nurse and Patient Safety. Opening additional beds without the staffing required, and/or appropriate beds space, to safely care for the additional patients places further pressure on nurses and midwives who are already working within an overstretched hospital.

Emergency Department Under Extreme Pressure

From Monday 28 September into the morning of Tuesday 29 September, the LGH ED experienced extraordinary demand.

The ANMF understands that:

- the ED peaked at 83 patients;



- up to 35 admitted patients awaiting ward beds remained in the ED; and
- the longest length of stay for an admitted patient awaiting a bed reached 88 hours.

These figures demonstrate the enormous pressure being carried by ED nurses and the flow-on consequences of insufficient capacity throughout the hospital. Noting that the ED is already staffed well below the Agreed Nursing Hours per Patient Presentation Benchmark.

The ANMF Lodges Urgent Industrial Application

As a result, the ANMF has today lodged an urgent application with the TIC regarding what is clear breaches of the industrially agreed safe staffing arrangements.

The application concerns the Nursing Hours per Patient Day (NHPPD) arrangements for Ward 6D on 3R and Ward 5D, as well as the Nursing Hours per Patient Presentation arrangements in ED.

The ANMF will seek urgent intervention to ensure the industrial instrument and agreed safe staffing arrangements are upheld.

Members Report 4d On 6d Remains Short Staffed

The ANMF has also been advised by members that three additional beds have been opened on 4D on 6D, but the additional agency staffing members were advised would accompany those additional beds has not been provided.

Members report that 4D on 6D continues to operate short staffed.

The ANMF is pursuing this issue as a matter of urgency.

The ANMF Demands Immediate Government Intervention

The ANMF has contacted the Office of the Minister for Health seeking an urgent response.

The ANMF has called for immediate measures including:

- Opening available Medi-Hotel capacity;
- Potentially expanding Hospital in the Home (HITH) teams to manage patients in Medi-Hotels;
- Calling of a Code Brown to coordinate a targeted whole-of-system response;
- Immediate additional agency nursing staff for the LGH ED;
- additional staffing for 4D on 6D and 6D on 3R;
- An urgent plan to identify additional capacity across the health system, including staffing district hospitals to full capacity ; and
- Immediate action to address patient flow and relieve the extraordinary pressure being experienced across the LGH.

This Crisis Requires More Than Another Short-Term Fix



The ANMF has also made it clear to Government that continually attempting to manage workforce shortages through agency nursing is not a sustainable solution.

The Government needs to make a genuine offer to settle the current nurses and midwives' wages and conditions dispute, including staffing arrangements, Nurse to Patient and Midwife Ratios that deliver safe workloads and wages and conditions capable of attracting nurses and midwives to Tasmania and, importantly, retaining those already here.

Rather than continuing to see enormous amounts of public money leave the state through reliance on agency nursing, Tasmania needs long-term investment in its permanent nursing and midwifery workforce.

Our Members Cannot Keep Carrying The System

The pressures facing the LGH are not new. Members have been raising concerns about access block, staffing shortages, excessive workloads and insufficient capacity for a prolonged period.

What we are now witnessing represents an escalation of those problems.

This cannot continue to be reduced to a blame game between the State and Federal Governments.

There is a health system crisis being experienced right now at the LGH. **Nurses and midwives are carrying that crisis at the bedside, patients are experiencing prolonged delays, and the Northern Tasmanian community is suffering the consequences.**

The ANMF will continue to pursue every available industrial and political avenue to ensure members are supported, safe staffing arrangements are upheld and the Government takes immediate action to address the crisis at the LGH.

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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