

Australian Nursing & Midwifery Federation Tasmania

ANMF NEWSFLASH

Mersey Community Hospital
Close Observation Unit
Members Escalate Workload Dispute

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) has formally notified the Tasmanian Health Service (THS) of a dispute regarding workload, staffing and patient safety concerns impacting nurses in the Close Observation Unit (COU) at the Mersey Community Hospital (MCH).

While members understand the need for additional beds to assist with patient flow, the opening of the seven-bed winter surge area (1B) has created significant additional workload for COU nurses without any increase in COU staffing.

Members have reported concerns including:

- Ongoing reliance on COU nurses to support agency staff working in 1B.
- Additional workload for the Associate Nurse Unit Manager (ANUM) for all shifts through orientation and ongoing clinical support.
- A lack of suitable medication facilities within 1B, requiring COU nurses to leave the unit to administer Schedule 4 and Schedule 8 medications.
- Reduced staffing levels within COU whenever a nurse is required to attend 1B, respond to MET calls or assist elsewhere in the hospital.
- Difficulty taking uninterrupted meal breaks.
- Increased clinical risk associated with an already junior-heavy skill mix.

ANMF members have repeatedly identified practical solutions to address these concerns, including:



- An additional four funded nursing hours per day for COU would allow the reintroduction of the 12-hour roster previously supported by staff.
- Rostering at least one permanent medical ward nurse alongside agency nurse in 1B.
- Establishing appropriate medication storage facilities within 1B.

The ANMF's position is clear: members support maintaining bed capacity and improving patient flow. However, this must not occur at the expense of safe staffing, patient safety and staff wellbeing.

The ANMF will continue to advocate strongly on behalf of members and pursue the matter through the dispute resolution process if necessary.

Members will be kept informed of any developments.

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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