

10 June 2019

## **ANMF Calls for Dedicated Child and Adolescent Health Unit**

The ANMF are dismayed to learn that the promised Liberal Hodgman Government commitment to a dedicated child and adolescent mental health unit at the Launceston General Hospital will not be realised as promised. During budget estimates last week, The Minister for Health Michael Ferguson confirmed that the beds in the proposed child and adolescent mental health unit in the Ward 4K extension will not be dedicated to child and adolescents experiencing mental health concerns, but would rather be used as swing beds. This has also been confirmed to ANMF officials late last week by the Tasmanian Health Service, that just two of the 6 beds would be dedicated to child and adolescent mental health patients.

Of equal concern, it has also been confirmed that the community child and adolescent mental health staff will be expected to staff these beds when occupied by a child and adolescent patient. ANMF Tasmanian Branch Executive Director, Andrew Brakey said today that 'it seems that the Tasmanian Government have been less than transparent about the proposed dedicated child and adolescent unit and are diluting their commitment further with reduced dedicated beds and also no dedicated staffing.'

Without dedicated mental health staff to care for the child and adolescent mental health patients the already stretched CAHMS staff will be having to provide two services when their staffing levels are not sufficient enough to even keep up with the demand in the community. This is a direct contradiction to the Tasmanian Government's Rethink Mental Health Plan that cited the need for only acute mental health services, but the need for comprehensive and holistic care provision in the community.

'Watering down the commitment for a dedicated child and adolescent mental health unit at the LGH and also expecting overstretched nurses to do even more with already insufficient resources is incredibly frustrating for nursing staff. This is just another example where the Tasmanian Government would unashamedly prioritise infrastructure over patients and the nursing staff providing the care and treatment'.

The Tasmanian Government have misled the Tasmanian community and nursing staff alike regarding the dedicated child and adolescent mental health unit at the Launceston General Hospital and must urgently reconsider their position to dedicate these beds to child and adolescent mental health patient with

appropriate resourcing including dedicated mental health nurses and to enable the community child and adolescent mental health team to continue their invaluable work in the community.

“End”

**Media contact:**

Andrew Brakey

Mobile: 0427 385 501

Email: [Andrew.brakey@anmftas.org.au](mailto:Andrew.brakey@anmftas.org.au)