

20 August 2020

## Mersey Community Hospital ED Reduced Opening Hours

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) were advised late yesterday that the Mersey Community Hospital opening hours were to be reduced further to 8am - 6pm, due to an inability to safely staff the medical practitioner's roster.

ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary, Emily Shepherd said that "the news came suddenly, it was not a surprise that COVID-19 had hampered the ability to access locum medical staff to enable safe staffing of the Mersey Community Hospital".

"The ANMF very much support the Mersey Community Hospital Emergency Department re-opening 24/7, however this needs to be done safely. Therefore, if there is not sufficient medical staff then this is not safe and must be addressed before returning to full operating hours."

The ANMF were advised by Government that there will be a concerted effort over the next three months while the Mersey Community Hospital Emergency Department opening hours are reduced, to recruit permanent medical staff to the area.

"The ANMF welcomed the decision to recruit permanent medical staff to the Mersey Community Hospital Emergency Department, as this will ensure that there are no further circumstances in the future where opening hours are hampered due to the reliance on locum medical staff."

"Permanent medical staff along with a strong nursing team at the Mersey Community Hospital Emergency Department will provide needed stability and confidence for the staff, but also the patients, their families and broader community."

The ANMF will be holding extensive consultation with members over the coming days to determine what resources, policies, and support nursing staff will need to ensure that when the reduced hours take effect at the Mersey Community Hospital Emergency Department next week, the nursing team as well as the community, are confident in the plan.

"End"

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