

16 September 2020

LGH ED Concerns Are Not New

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) stated today issues surrounding the Launceston General Hospital are not new.

ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary, Emily Shepherd said it is with dismay that concerns raised regarding safety and bed block at the LGH Emergency Department are being purported as new issues and issues raised for political gain.

“The reality is, these issues are long-standing and have daily challenged both medical and nursing staff for many years,” Ms Shepherd said.

“In 2018, out of pure frustration and management indifference, Nurses at the LGH Emergency Department started an industrial campaign – ‘Bring Your Own Bed’.

“Nurses were seeking a resolution to their long-standing issues of unsafe workloads, risks to patient safety, inappropriate wait times, ambulance ramping and bed block. Thousands of postcards from the Northern Tasmanian community were sent to then Minister for Health Michael Ferguson, calling for urgent reform. Solutions were not forthcoming.”

Ms Shepherd said LGH Emergency Department Nurses did not give up on their ED, their colleagues or their community. They continued their campaign with a daily vigil which ran for over a year.

“This saw Nurses, in their own time, standing out the front of the LGH begging for the Tasmanian Government to act.

“Ultimately, the only way that some short-term solutions could be gained was by lodging a dispute with the independent Tasmanian Industrial Commission, which provided some staffing support for the unsafe workloads.

‘To date, the issues facing ANMF members and their medical colleagues continue to escalate.

“In the last financial year there was an additional 850 instances of ambulance ramping and the wait times admitted patients have wait in the ED for an inpatient bed has increased by almost half an hour.

“That the situation has become so dire health professionals have had to make their concerns public in an effort to prompt action is an absolute disgrace.

“How the concerns came to light is irrelevant - what needs attention is the need for immediate action. Continuing to dispute these significant safety concerns only makes the delays longer.

“The Tasmanian Government, Department of Health and the Tasmanian Health Service need to listen to the health professionals who know what it is actually like in the LGH Emergency Department on a daily basis.

“They must take action on what clinicians need to make it safe for them and importantly their patients, both now and for the longer term.

“It is totally unacceptable to withhold vital resources from an ED with clinicians begging for support and expect them and the patients presenting there to just make do, despite the well-documented evidence highlighting wait times and safety concerns.”

Ms Shepherd said on September 7 the ANMF raised a grievance on behalf of ED members about issues which remain unresolved since first raised in 2018.

“The ANMF will work to address these in collaboration with the Tasmanian Health Service but will again take the matter to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission if the THS doesn’t adequately address our members concerns.”

“End”

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