

16 April 2021

MEDIA DOORSTOP: NURSES AND MIDWIVES HAVE A CALL TO ACTION FOR ALL POLITICAL CANDIDATES

MEDIA DOORSTOP TODAY

WHEN: TODAY, 16 April 2021

TIME: 2.30pm

WHERE: Launceston General Hospital Main Entrance, Charles Street

WHO: ANMF nursing and midwifery members will be available to speak with media

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF), alongside our nursing, midwifery, and assistant in nursing members, will take action at the Launceston General Hospital on Charles Street today to raise their concerns regarding the current health crisis.

Issues with staffing levels and access block in the Emergency Department cannot be ignored any longer. Members are calling on all political candidates to recognise the issues and commit to supporting nurses, midwives, and assistants in nursing in the lead up to the State Election.

“The ANMF are incredibly pleased that the Greens and Labor have publicly supported our alternative health policy launched earlier this week. The Greens have also made a commitment to an additional 400 graduates, 120 permanent pool staff across the State, and additional Psychiatric Emergency Nurses, specifically for the Launceston General Hospital and Royal Hobart Hospital Emergency Departments. Independent Jax Ewin has also committed to the ANMF’s alternative health policy.”

“While the ANMF have had robust and supportive conversations with many independent candidates, a specific commitment from the Liberals has not yet been received. This is incredibly disappointing,” said ANMF Branch Secretary Emily Shepherd.

“The Launceston General Hospital has the worst performing Emergency Department in the country. Additionally, it has almost 100 FTE positions vacant. The nurses and midwives at the hospital are extremely fatigued and worn down by regular overtime and double shifts. An immediate intervention is required.”

The Launceston General Hospital re-development will not see immediate improvements to capacity or increased beds to alleviate access block. Even if it did, the need to recruit additional staff would be more important than ever. The critical focus should be on embedding additional nurses and midwives into the Tasmanian Health Service to ensure existing patients and clients are able to access quality and timely care.

“Members at the Launceston General Hospital Emergency Department have been taking industrial action since 2018 to call for more resources to support them and their patients due to the workloads associated with bed block, yet to date limited measures have been implemented.”

“The ANMF will now take these grievances to the Tasmanian Industrial Commission on 7 May 2021, to seek assistance from the Commission to resolve these long-standing issues, as it would appear that neither the Department of Health nor the Tasmanian Liberal Government will take the lead to do so.”

Increased staffing for community services such as community nursing and child and parenting services must also be implemented to allow these areas to work to their full potential. Supporting these services would allow opportunities for preventative health education – especially in child and parenting services. Ultimately, this would reduce the risk of Emergency Department presentations, however even these services are struggling to meet current demand due to staffing issues.

“Irrespective of all other election commitments, our members need to see a pledge from all parties and candidates to address the current staffing crisis, to retain and support our existing workforce, and implement measures to build the nursing and midwifery workforce in Tasmania.”

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