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Premier Confirms Workload Issues: Budget Estimates

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation Tasmanian Branch (ANMF) is alarmed that the Premier all but confirmed the workload and workforce challenges being experienced by nurses and midwives in Tasmania in budget estimates commentary, but still no action is being taken to shore up the workforce in Tasmania, causing safety concerns for members.

The comments were made in Budget Estimates in Hobart this week, which also showed that there has been an increase from \$10.9 million in the 2021-22 financial year, to \$17.6 million being poured into obtaining and paying Agency Staff to fill the gaps, instead of recruiting and retaining local nurses and midwives.

Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmania Branch Secretary said the comments were disconcerting.

“The government says it is willing to always consult with us and that there are processes in place, yet ANMF wrote to the Premier requesting to meet prior to members taking industrial action and we have not yet even had a response.

“The Premier has confirmed this week there are workforce shortages in the health system, but his government has failed to come up with no real tangible outcomes to address the growing safety fears of our members. Unfortunately, what we have seen is a government that clearly has no insight into the major risk that the Tasmanian Health System is facing when it comes to having a workforce to deliver health services.

“The only tangible action that the Government could report on was an increase of Transition to Practice nurses being recruited with 260 Transition to Practice nurses being recruited to fill gaps left by a growing number of skilled and experienced nurses, yet minimal additional Clinical Nurse Educators and Clinical Coaches have been put in to support these early career nurses and where they have been it has been through the ANMF raising workload disputes on behalf of members.

“ANMF members have been reporting significant stress arising from unsafe workloads for months, with hundreds of vacancies and double shifts increasing across all regions in the last 12 months it is astonishing that the Government is refusing to meet with the ANMF to solve the looming safety crisis not only for nurses, midwives and their patients but importantly for the entire Tasmanian community,” Ms Shepherd said.

The Tasmanian Government must take immediate action to address the growing safety fears for the Tasmanian Health system.

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