

STATEMENT PROVIDED BY WILLIAM GORDON (Labor for Bass)

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the ANMF Tasmanian Branch Election Manifesto. Although the Labor Party will enter an official response to the Manifest, I would like to provide a personal statement regarding the situation of Tasmania's health services.

My name is William Gordon. I come from a family of health professionals. My father, Paul Pielage, was a consultant in the Launceston General Hospital Emergency Department for 30 years, 25 of which he was the director of the department. My mother is a nurse of 40 years who has practiced mainly in Angio, but has also worked as a project nurse, in research, and as a Nurse Unit Manager.

My sisters, brother, stepparents, my partner and her sisters, are all in healthcare, working for the Tasmanian Health Service.

For full disclosure, I am also on the Branch Council for the Tasmanian Branch of the ANMF. I took a leave of absence immediately after being notified of my candidacy for the state election. I join the Branch Council to fight for improved conditions for Tasmanian nurses and their patients.

During 2019-2020, I was the nurse who exposed the events at the LGH Children's Ward, 4K, to the media. During this time, I witnessed the Liberal government and the Tasmanian Health Service fail its nurses, its clients, and the Tasmanian community. The events on 4K were not going to be released to the public and there was no appetite for change, for Tasmania's children. Your children.

I decided to run in this election after hearing countless stories of people suffering in a health system that pays lip service to accountability, transparency, and honesty. A health system that **says** it listens, and a government that does not respect the healthcare workers of Tasmania. I am tired of the empty promises to healthcare workers, made with no consultation with those who work the frontline. Ridiculous promises of infrastructure while we have no staff to fill it. I am tired of hearing countless statements about "record funding", but nothing to show for it. I am tired of a government that would rather spend millions of dollars on locum doctors and agency nurses (and paying for their accommodation in expensive hotels), but constantly argues against a pay increase for our local workforce to retain them.

We do not have a funding issue. We have a wastage issue.

And after years of failure to listen, it is no wonder we not only have retention issues, but

we also have difficulty with succession planning, upskilling workers, filling double or extra shifts, and why nurses are taking increased sick leave. There is a severe deterioration of the culture in our health service. Nurses are afraid to advocate for their patients due to a health service that fails to listen, or even reprimands them for speaking up. And when nurses detest the workplace culture, and the loss of ability to advocate for those most vulnerable, they become silent. Or they leave.

I am going to change that. Not just for Bass, but for the whole of Tasmania. If I am elected, no nurse in this state will ever be afraid to advocate for their patient again. Every healthcare worker in this state will now have a voice representing them in parliament.

I will only make one promise. I will meet you at the table. The first step to improving our healthcare service is to respect the workers. If I do not respect you, I do not respect my family, my partner, or my colleagues and friends. And if I do not respect you, I am not fit to represent you.

So, I ask every healthcare worker in Tasmania to vote for change this election. This is our chance to improve Tasmania's health services. Or we can continue with this current government and the status quo; with the lack of respect, failure to listen to healthcare workers and ridiculous promises that never eventuate.

The choice is yours.