



MEDIA RELEASE

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SA Health Spins as Nurses Worry Patients Will Suffer

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA Branch) today met with nurses at Margaret Tobin Centre and Flinders Medical Centre Emergency Department who have reluctantly determined to respect the recommendations of the Industrial Relations Commission of South Australia (SAIRC) by lifting bans after SA Health implemented bed closures, contrary to previous commitments.

Nurses applied the bans to circumvent the bed closures (by keeping them open with safe staffing levels in place) in an effort to protect the interests of Mental Health patients and the south Australian community.

"We are very proud of the actions undertaken by nurses in an effort to protect the interests of their patients. This sends an important message to SA Health that nurses always put forward the best interests of their patients" said Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars, ANMF (SA Branch) CEO/Secretary.

"However, nurses have expressed disappointment with the actions of SA Health and we are very concerned as to the implications of these bed closures on the community"

"The nurses understood that SA Health had committed not to close the beds unless and until evidence had been produced and discussed that clearly showed the bed closures could occur safely"

"At the IRCSA yesterday, SA Health denied that they had made a commitment to keep the beds open, which is clearly contrary to our understanding.

"Clearly yesterday's developments put into question the ability to conduct good faith discussions with SA Health"

"In future, we will expect all commitments to be formally documented. This is unfortunate, given in relationships built on trust and respect, we should be able to conduct business in fluid and genuine way.

"This outcome of the Commission hearing is also inconsistent with the assertions published in today's 'The Advertiser' (26/1/13, page 27) in which the Advertiser attributes SA Health representatives with stating that 'the commissioner had ruled it (lifting the bans) was in the best interests of patients'"

"We were at the same hearing and it was abundantly clear that the Commission did not make any such assertion.

"We continue to adhere to our position that leaving the beds open is in the best interests of patients"

"It remains our concern that the closure of these further beds will exacerbate an already overwhelmed Emergency Department and further block access to vital services for those most in need."

"Nurses have also reserved their right to take further action in the future".

"We will be raising our concerns with both patient safety and the conduct and behaviour of SA Health with the new Minister for Health and Ageing, The Honourable Jack Snelling", said Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars, ANMF (SA Branch) CEO/Secretary.

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