

Media release

Wednesday, 27 August 2014

Call for circuit breaker at metropolitan EDs

- **Press conference at the ANMF (SA Branch) offices, 191 Torrens Road, Ridleyton, at 230pm today**

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (SA Branch) has called on the Minister for Health to explain how the measures implemented nearly two weeks ago have relieved the issues of overcrowding and ramping at metropolitan EDs, amid ongoing reports of a worsening environment for patients and nursing and midwifery staff.

On August 14, the Minister advised that additional measures would be implemented including opening more capacity at Flinders Medical Centre, the Royal Adelaide and Lyell McEwin Hospitals, purchasing beds in the private sector, rescheduling elective surgery procedures and rostering on additional doctors and nurses.

However, in an urgent letter sent to the Minister this morning, ANMF (SA Branch) CEO/Secretary Adj Assoc Professor Elizabeth Dabars AM raised nurses' and midwives' concerns that these measures have had little impact so far.

"Despite implementing these measures nearly two weeks ago, nurses and midwives have advised that they have made little difference to the working environment in metropolitan EDs," Ms Dabars said.

Ms Dabars also raised serious concerns that many nurses and midwives were now at breaking point, and that patient safety was being compromised.

"We are being told that patients within the ED are being treated in corridors and that mental health patients are often in kept close proximity to other patients in a completely unsuitable environment," Ms Dabars said.

"While the Minister has acknowledged the "unprecedented" demand currently facing metropolitan emergency departments, this provides little comfort to the dedicated staff working in such a challenging and stressful environment."

"We firmly believe that further, additional 'unprecedented' measures - including the consistent implementation of criteria-led discharge across metropolitan sites - need to be considered as a matter of urgency."