

Nursing and Midwifery Workforce

Tasmania's public hospitals are in crisis. A key reason is the Liberals' ten-year underinvestment in nurses and midwives, coupled with their failure to plan for recruiting and retaining these essential staff. We will fight to have 120 nurses and midwives (50 in the RHH, 40 in the LGH, and 30 in the NWRH) recruited each year until 2030, as part of our bigger plan to invest in repairing the health system.

Chronic underinvestment in nurses and midwives has resulted in unsafe staffing levels,¹ patients being asked to consider leaving the hospital early,² and the Department cancelling staff leave to fill critical staffing shortages.³ Urgent investment is needed to ensure staffing levels are safe, and vital hospital roles are filled.

Clinical coaches are essential for retaining existing staff, and to support new staff and nurses who transfer from other settings.⁴

In 2022 the Liberals promised to increase the number of clinical coaches who would provide the supervision, support and assistance to help nurses and midwives meet certain competencies.⁵ They have not met their commitment.⁶

Our plan would ensure 100 new clinical coach positions are established, so that every ward and unit has a clinical coach.

Assistant nurse and midwife unit managers are vital for managing access and flow. A lack of nursing staff has meant people in these roles have not been able to dedicate themselves to core duties, instead having to split their focus on caring for patients as well.

Our plan includes backfilling assistant nurse and midwife unit managers, and ensuring they can focus on their critical work without being required to perform other duties.

The Royal Hobart Hospital is currently the only hospital with 'nurse navigator' positions, whose role is to manage patient flow through the emergency department.

Discharge nurses work with other providers (such as the NDIS or aged care) and families to plan a patient's journey from hospital. Advanced planning improves patient flow through the hospital, and reduces bed block, emergency waiting times and ambulance ramping. It also reduces family stress.

Our plan includes funding discharge nurses, and nurse navigators for every emergency department.

Psychiatric evaluation nurses are currently not available 24/7 in emergency departments. This absence can mean patients in acute mental health distress are often not getting the care they need, when they need it. It has also meant people needing acute mental health support are staying longer in emergency departments than necessary,

¹ Lohberger, L, [Exhausted nurses call for 'safe staffing and decent pay' during Hobart strike](#), ABC News, 2022.

² Bailey, S, [Royal Hobart Hospital leaves note for patients seeing if they would like to leave early](#), The Mercury, 2023.

³ Holmes, A, [Tasmanian government hoses down concern over hospital strain as Facebook rant goes viral](#), ABC News, 2022.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Manuel, C, [Nursing union actively considering industrial action over unmet promises](#), The Examiner, 2024.

⁶ Ibid.

which is terrible for them and reduces the beds available for other patients.

Our plan includes funding the 24/7 presence of Psychiatric Evaluation Nurses in the Royal Hobart Hospital, Launceston General hospital, and North-West Regional Hospital emergency departments.

We support a [specialised training facility](#) for a range of health care professionals, including nursing.

And we have a plan to improve recruitment and retention across key public service roles.

[Read our recruitment and retention plan here.](#)

This includes incentives such as HECS debt repayments, faster access to long-service leave, cadetships, vicarious trauma leave, and government-funded housing.

Budget (\$m)

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$5.96m	\$12.59m	\$19.84m	\$28.14m	\$66.53m

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