

Entry Permit Holder Report

SafeWork SA

Application ID 21674756

Entry Permit Holder	
Full Name:	Bernadette Mulholland
Permit Number:	ET-22-03868
Union Represented:	South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association
Worksite Entered	
Business Name:	Flinders Medical Centre
Industry:	Other Health
Address:	Flinders Drive, Bedford Park
Date workplace entered:	20 June 2025

I Bernadette Mulholland am of the opinion that the PCBU has contravened the WHS legislation relating to:

	Alleged Contravention	More information	Was the contravention rectified?
PCBU Alleged Contravention 1	Not maintaining a safe work environment	I was called to attend the Flinders Medical Centre Emergency Department (FMC ED) on Friday, 20 June 2025. I was advised that there were 30 admitted patients in the ED waiting for a bed, "Wednesday had a psych patient who was too dangerous for hospital Security Code Black team to restrain and we had to let them walk out and call police. The STAR Division of SAPOL was sent to restrain the patient and bring back. There is currently a psych patient boarding in ED who has now attempted to grab the	No

		<p>police officers firearm at least once. I attended at approx. 5.00 PM and spoke to doctors who were clearly shaken and worried and wanted a response. The fear ran right through the medical staff one doctor stated "this was a near miss, critical incident, mass shooting" the medical officer was clearly shaken and advised the same patient had attended approx. 4 weeks earlier and clinician were not made aware of previous history. Need to know violent patient history.</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 2	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>Same patient on 20 June 2025 attended a few weeks before. Patient was sleeping in the FMC ED in a bed woke up came out of cubicle yelling "I will destroy everything" and pulled the curtain from the roof he then proceeded to pull curtain off another roof. Patient then threw a full bucket of clinical wipes at carer hitting them in the back. Patient picked up the bin and threw across the room. Patient then threw food tray across the room. Patient picked up random objects throwing at staff, Code Black was called. Patient then picked up wet floor sign smashing the perspex window and breaking it in north nurses station. Patient then used the wet floor sign to smash two computers in the nurses station breaking them and smashing all the equipment behind the perspex glass. Nurses locked themselves in the drug room and many doctors and nurses in the nurse station moved themselves to a safer place whilst the patient continued to break things in the nurses station and yell, frightening many</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 3	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>for security to arrive. I have requested the SLSs pursuant to S118</p> <p>Prior to these two incidences I was told another patient was brought in by police following property damage and left in the waiting room by police. The patient became violent breaking the doors in the waiting room frightening other patients and staff. I was told the</p>	No

		patient then head butted one of the airlock doors (see photo) smashing the glass. I was advised that the patient remained in the ED that night and the following day. I was told these patients are men, very aggressive, large and violent.	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 4	Not maintaining a safe work environment	The next incident was two days prior to the patient who attempted to get the gun off police staff, I understand this was 18 June 2025. A very large man under the influence of meth I was told he was on an ITO I was told he was "extremely violent" , the staff and patients were in significant danger and there was nothing to be done but to allow the man to leave the ED for fear of physical harm to others in the ED. The police were called and the patient was restrained by STAR Force officers and returned to the ED. I have requested all SLSs related to violent incidences in the FMC and Noarlunga ED over the last 5 weeks.	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 5	Not maintaining a safe work environment	I was told that similar incidences had happened at the Noarlung Hospital ED with a violent patient assaulting and injuring staff in the ED last week. I have asked for the SLSs pursuant to S118 of violent incidences in the Noarlunga Hospital ED in the last 5 weeks.	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 6	Not maintaining a safe work environment	In relation to my attendance on Friday 20 June 2025, the violent patient had been restrained in one cubicle and had been sleeping, the patient woke up. Across from this patient's cubicle another patient had police security. The police officer who was looking after their patient was unaware that the patient in the other cubicle had awoken. The police officer had their back to the patient who launched at the police officer and tried to grab the police officer's gun.	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 7	Not maintaining a safe work environment	I was told doctors are shocked by the escalation of violence in the FMC ED and this is causing physical and mental harm.	No

		<p>The doctors advised there is significant meth amphetamines been seen in patients who become very violent.</p> <p>These mental health patients are waiting long periods of time in the ED waiting for a bed some up to 60 hours. This is making the patients more violent.</p> <p>I was told by one doctor that a patient was violent and she sought to de-escalate the violence. The patient just wanted a bed and not to have to wait in the FMC ED as this was making him worse. The doctor empathised with him and the violence reduced. The doctor stated the man was huge and it could have gone either way. I said what if the violence had escalated she said I would have had to run. The doctor has requested the patient be given "soft shackling" this was not implemented and the advice was that</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 8	Not maintaining safe systems of work	<p>if this patient woke up if and became violent then they would be shackled, this did not make sense to the doctors given the patient's history.</p> <p>I was advised that given mental health patients with lower acuity are now taken to other facilities and not EDs then the FMC ED are now only seeing highly acute complex mental health patients in the ED and there is no reprieve. I was told it is not just men who are violent but many women are also yelling and lashing out but given their size and height this can "sometimes" be managed.</p> <p>I was told that most mental health patients wait in the FMC ED greater than 24 hours but sometimes for days.</p> <p>I was told that there are increased patients arriving at the ED who are using meth and are violent and the staff and other patients are being traumatised by the behaviour.</p>	No

		I was told that police who bring these patients to the ED are not staying with patients. I was told this is a dangerous practice and leaves everyone vulnerable to violent behaviour.	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 9	Not maintaining safe systems of work	<p>I was told that a doctor has after the events on Wednesday and Friday last week asked for a "stab vest" that will protect him from being stabbed because the violence has got so bad in the ED.</p> <p>I was told the mental health doctors were run off their feet.</p> <p>I was told that at this time it appears the violent patients are only lashing out and hurting staff but it is only a matter of time before other patients are injured.</p> <p>I was told their is no where safe to place mental health patients who are violent - such as a seclusion room in the ED, that there is no safe space and that the ED was sub-optimal for mental health patients.</p> <p>The ED needs seclusion rooms</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 10	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>I was told there are two types of security guards those who look on and watch violent incidences happening and those who actively intervene. I was told there needs to be high quality security guards employed by SALHN itself and not outsourced to contractors. Good quality security guards; who are regular and form part of the team and who are employed by SALHN would provide stability. These security guards would know repeat patients and there history of violence.</p> <p>The security guards must intervene otherwise what is the point.</p> <p>There needs to be a better system of security guards to ensure safety of staff and patients from violence</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 11	Not maintaining safe systems of work	The doctors in the ED stated there is a shortage of senior mental health	No

		<p>nurses in the ED junior nurses do not have the necessary skill to address the violent patients or make decisions. The nurses need to be Level 3 and 4 this is urgent.</p> <p>The doctors state mental health patients who are violent or agitated are waiting too long for a PICU bed in the ED as there is simply not enough.</p> <p>There is a worry that when the new PICU Mental health beds are opened in October then the beds will be taken up with patients from other LHNs such as R&R and Forensics this needs to be prevented.</p> <p>The answer is not to allow the mental health patients to stay so long in the ED but there are not enough mental health beds and it is highly likely that people in the ED will be hurt waiting for the new beds.</p> <p>It is not the job of the clinicians to find the beds they dont have the authority to purchase beds.</p> <p>The doctors did say as a temporary measure is to use the beds in the AMU, I will put this to PBCU.</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 12	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>The doctors all said new mental health beds need to be found immediatly by SALHN.</p> <p>I was told that doctors and nurses are feeling stressed and shocked by the violence in the ED over the last few weeks. I noted the distress directly and how upset the doctors were about the violence and the significant risks to their safety and patients ongoing.</p> <p>I was told more senior registrars were needed at night given the access block and violence. There was a great deal of sick leave but it was a view that the staff were not physically sick but mentally drained by the unrelenting</p>	No

		violence commonly now occurring in the ED	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 13	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>I was told there was insufficient resus space and acute capacity now in the ED this needs to be addressed</p> <p>I was told there needs to be timely access to PICU beds.</p> <p>I was told there needs to be PICU capacity at Glenside for Rural and Remote patients and at Noarlunga Hospital</p> <p>I was told that patients need a smoking area as the inability to smoke is creating agitation and aggression placing other patients at risk and staff in the ED</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 14	Not maintaining safe systems of work	<p>I met with the PCBU delegates who were very concerned about the increase in violence in the ED and dangers to the patients they agreed that the following needed to be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better security and accepted that these security needed to be regular interventionalist and part of the team. my view is that the external contract for security guards is not working and security guards should be employees of SALHN. - the PCBU would take on board having police officers hand over their gun prior to entry into the ED. This is done in mental health facilities. - The PCBU acknowledged needed to look at more senior nurses. - The PCBU acknowledged the ED needed a seclusion room and mental health patient interview room but there is not space in the ED to add these areas. - The PCBU acknowledged issues relating to working with polic and they would be arranging a meeting with SAPOL. 	No

PCBU Alleged Contravention 15	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>The PCBU acknowledged there was not enough PICU beds and when the beds opened at FMC these beds are likely to also be accessed by other LHNs and this would make the problem worse. For example, forensic services have not enough beds so these patients may access SALHN even though forensic patients are in NALHN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There needs to be a process for a repeat violent patient attending the FMC ED so the staff are aware and have line of sight - this has not been happening.. - The PCBU are considering hiring another mental health Registrar and nurse practitioner for the ED. - The PCBU are looking at allied health support and a Mental Health MET Team - The PCBU will look at AMU beds at FMC, will consider vests but are reluctant will look at resus capacity and talk to SAAS. <p>The PCBU acknowledge there is a significant meth problem in SALHN catchment and will need to talk to drug and alcohol services.</p> <p>The PCBU acknowledged there is increasing and serious violence now occurring in the FMC ED.</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 16	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>Given the state of the ED and violence and the rising number of acutely unwell Mental Health patients there needs to be an urgent discussion with DH what they will do to assist SALHN.</p> <p>There needs to be something done regarding patients attending on meth.</p> <p>DHW need to clearly communicate to all LHNs that clinical staff need to protect themselves and the employer will accept accountability and responsibility for any decision made to</p>	No



		<p>ensure the safety of staff and other patients.</p> <p>I have asked for ongoing meetings with PCBU over next few weeks to implement safety solutions.</p> <p>I have asked for all SLSs pertaining to violent incidences in the FMC ED and Noarlunga eD over the last 5 weeks</p> <p>The site would not let me upload photos will send seperately</p>	
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