

Entry Permit Holder Report

SafeWork SA

Application ID 20981230

Entry Permit Holder	
Full Name:	Roushan Walsh
Permit Number:	ET-23-02322
Union Represented:	SASMOA
Worksite Entered	
Business Name:	Mt Gambier & Districts Hospital
Industry:	Other Health
Address:	276/300 Wehl Street North, Mount Gambier SA 5290
Date workplace entered:	6 February 2025

I Roushan Walsh 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	Inadequate facilities or access to facilities	Workers consistently reported inadequate beds / bays in the ED as well as inpatient beds and associated equipment to treat the number of patients presenting to the ED, resulting in a crowded wait room, long wait times, long ED stays, ambulance ramping, and a crowded corridor (unofficial holding area for paramedics and patients not fit for this purpose). The paediatric beds are reportedly regularly used to treat adult patients, and the two resuscitation rooms are often in use, leading to additional resus	No

		<p>patients being treated in corridors or less equipped bays.</p> <p>Workers described the wait room as 'horrid' with patients waiting up to 4-5 hours and standing up as all chairs were occupied.</p> <p>Ambulance ramping, which used to be 'unheard of in Mt Gambier' was now common to have 1 or 2 ramped, and up to 4 ambulances (understood to be the total available in Mt Gambier) ramped at once. Workers reported patients could be offloaded in corridors if paramedics needed to leave.</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 2	Inadequate facilities or access to facilities	<p>A recent incident was described where a patient's dislocated shoulder was treated in a cubicle with no curtain as the resuscitation room was full.</p> <p>The EPH was unable to find a location in the ED or close to the ED to have discussions privately, other than in the 'family room' briefly. The family room is under renovation and is currently without a toilet or storage area.</p> <p>There is inadequate office space available for doctors to complete clinical support work or have confidential professional development / performance conversations. Clinical support work includes research, teaching, risk management and more. The EPH observed 3 computers in a shared office space, with 4 consultants on shift. Workers advised there is a plan to relocate from this office to a smaller one following renovations, exacerbating this issue.</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 3	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>Workers consistently reported inadequate nursing and medical staffing numbers as well as inadequate seniority / experience within the medical team to meet the needs of the increasing number of complex cases and overall presentations. Recent loss of experienced registrars has left a vacuum of doctors capable of staffing a shift with adequate expertise.</p>	No

		<p>Workers report a steady longstanding increase in presentation numbers and complexity with a recent spike since at least November 2024. Reference was made to the last few months as having multiple patients staying for 24 hours, a few over 36 hours, and one over 48 hours in the ED.</p> <p>Managing patients was described as 'frustrating', as 'moving deck chairs on a sinking ship, trying to keep things turning over.'</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 4	Not maintaining a safe work environment	<p>Workers reported extreme stress during a shift and physical exhaustion at the end of shift, 'running on empty', 'using every cell in our brain and body to get to the end of the day.' One worker expressed the need for change before there is a 'disaster'.</p> <p>One worker described difficulty sleeping thinking about the limitations of the ED in terms of facilities and staffing.</p> <p>One worker described a recent incident in which they were unable to spend adequate time with the family of a patient who died in the ED, both leading up to the death of that patient and afterward. This worker described their role as including conversations with family while determining if a patient may survive, and preparing them for death if not. This worker described holding back tears while having only a quick conversation with family following a patient death about paperwork for the coroner.</p>	No
PCBU Alleged Contravention 5	Not maintaining safe systems of work	<p>Inadequate staffing has meant doctors lose clinical support time when colleagues are on sick leave or annual leave. Annual leave was described as difficult to access, requiring individuals to make arrangements to cover their leave, which was not usually possible at short to medium notice.</p>	No

		<p>Workers were often taking annual leave or locums taking breaks as they were so run down from the working environment, rather than accessing annual leave for recreational purposes.</p> <p>Consultants have been required to work night shifts or have been recalled to work night shifts and / or called in early, with an overall increase in number of recalls in recent months.</p> <p>Training Medical Officers have been "overwhelmed".</p> <p>Workers indicated their nursing colleagues had reported logging multiple incidents into the SLS over the recent months related to increased patient numbers and risk to work health and safety that were not addressed.</p>	
PCBU Alleged Contravention 6	Not maintaining safe systems of work	<p>One worker described difficulty logging an incident into the SLS for a whole shift as the required form is not customised for this (requires reference to particular patients or staff).</p> <p>Workers consistently described the management of the ED as reliant on the human spirit, of exceptional team work, of co-workers rallying to ensure patients were safely cared for, rather than safe systems of work.</p>	No