ANMF (Vic Branch) Policy

Nurse / midwife unit manager appointments and ward bed capacity

Preamble
With the evolution of nursing care models and an increase in consumer expectations, health services have been redesigned to provide privacy and dignity for patients and an environment more conducive to safe, contemporary nursing and midwifery practice. In this context, the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) [ANMF (Vic Branch)] believes that the optimum ward size in a non-specialised area is 30 beds, and for specialised areas, 12 beds – unless there has been a staffing agreement reached with ANMF). This size allows the Nurse/Midwife Unit Manager and Associate Unit Manager (however titled) to effectively manage the ward environment and coordinate services, and to ensure quality outcomes for patients, in addition to their clinical responsibilities.

The ANMF (Vic Branch) believes that the current career structure, described in the applicable certified enterprise agreements incorporating the Nurses (Victorian Health Services) Award 2000, and accommodates all models under which nursing and midwifery services are delivered.

This view is supported by employers in the private sector who agreed to an Award variation specifying a ward size of 30 beds or less, with a maximum margin of 10 per cent.

Policy
It is the policy of the ANMF (Vic Branch) that:

1. The recommended upper size limit for all wards/units is 30 beds.

2. Any proposal to develop, collapse or amalgamate wards or units into one ward or unit must comply with these maximums and will only be considered on the basis of geographic alignment and clinical compatibility.

3. A full-time Nurse/Midwife Unit Manager (however titled) shall be appointed to each ward/unit.

4. The number of permanent Associate Nurse/Midwife Unit Managers (however titled) in each ward/unit shall equate to five EFT where the ward or unit operates as a seven day 24 hour service.