

19 August 2026

Dr Dale Bramley
Chief Executive
Health NZ Te Whatu Ora

Kia ora Dale,

Collective letter from NZNO members at North Shore Hospital Emergency Department declaring a state of emergency

We, the undersigned members of the Emergency Department at Health New Zealand North Shore, are declaring a state of emergency in our Emergency Department.

We can no longer remain silent while unsafe staffing puts our patients, ourselves and our community at risk every day. We demand immediate action to end chronic understaffing and implement culturally safe nurse-to-patient ratios.

We are staffed for a department of approximately 40 patients, yet we operate over capacity every day. Running at 100% over capacity has become the average, and throughout this winter North Shore Emergency Department has at times operated at 200-300% over capacity. We refuse to accept this as normal. We have far exceeded the limits of safe practice. Our patients are not safe, and neither are the staff expected to care for them.

The 2025 FTE calculations identified that our department required an additional 25 nursing FTE to meet patient demand and provide safe care. This was agreed through the established process and signed off locally by Waitematā and the New Zealand Nurses Organisation. Despite this, there has been no approval to recruit these positions and no timeline for doing so. As these calculations are already retrospective, we believe the true staffing shortfall is now even greater.

This crisis was entirely predictable. Health New Zealand failed to adequately plan for winter demand, placing patients and staff at unnecessary risk. The recruitment freeze introduced in 2024 has made an already critical situation worse. Despite the clear clinical need, Waitematā has neither the authority nor the budget to recruit the additional FTE our department requires. We have submitted hundreds of incident reports documenting the risks and consequences of unsafe staffing, yet Health New Zealand has refused to act.

Every shift causes harm. Patients are waiting up to an hour and a half to be triaged, hours for ECGs that should be performed immediately, more than 50 hours in the Emergency Department awaiting admission and are missing essential medications because the system is overwhelmed. Others are left lying in soiled beds in overcrowded corridors because no one has the capacity to provide the dignified care they deserve.

We also bear the brunt of the distress, frustration and abuse from frightened and vulnerable patients and whānau who are rightly outraged by the care they are receiving. Our colleagues across the hospital are raising the alarm as well. We are exhausted. We are burnt out. The personal and professional toll is immense.

This situation is neither inevitable nor acceptable. It is the direct result of the recruitment freeze and chronic understaffing, leaving our Emergency Department without the workforce required to provide safe care. We cannot continue to shoulder the consequences while our patients are exposed to preventable harm.

We are calling on Health New Zealand to act immediately by:

- Approving and recruiting, as a starting point, the additional 25 nursing FTE identified through the Care Capacity Demand Management (CCDM) process without further delay. Nurse management and the nurse education team have confirmed they have the capacity to onboard the staff.
- Committing to culturally appropriate nurse-to-patient ratios that reflect patient acuity and demand. Comparable jurisdictions staff Emergency Departments at 1:1 in resuscitation, 1:3 in acute care, and 1:4 in fast track (this includes triage and short stay).

We have raised concerns through every available channel. We have completed incident reports. We have escalated the risks. We have waited.

We have reviewed and considered the recent proposed staffing increase. It is well under half of what we require as evidenced by our FTE calculations and comparable safe staffing ratios in other jurisdictions. We are done waiting and accepting half measures that do not fix the problem.

This is our declaration of a state of emergency. We will not accept the normalisation of preventable harm or the continued degradation of our public health system.

Signed North Shore Emergency Department Nurses, Healthcare Assistants and allies,

Adriana Carlucci-Hercun, Associate

Clinical Charge Nurse

Alexandra Pye, Registered Nurse

Alice Haskell, Registered Nurse

Amaani Shrestha, Registered Nurse

Amy Kang, Registered Nurse

Andi Rabin, Registered Nurse

Nicola Headifen, Registered Nurse

Anesu Dzikiti, Registered Nurse
Angela de Zwart, Registered Nurse
Angela Sagala, Registered Nurse
Angharad Heard, Registered Nurse
Anthony Eltanal, Registered Nurse
Apikale Fifita, Healthcare Assistant
Ariel Hayley, Registered Nurse
Asha Eldho, Registered Nurse
Beccy Brown, Registered Nurse
Brayden Tie, Acute Care Practitioner
Bria Fitzgerald, Registered Nurse
Bridget Nottingham, Nurse Practitioner
Brooke Butler, Registered Nurse
Camilo Jr Odal Cempron, Registered Nurse
Carole Oosterhof, Registered Nurse
Cayla Kritzing, Registered Nurse
Charlie McKenzie-Linnell, Registered Nurse
Charlotte Simpson, Registered Nurse
Christine Lafferty, Registered Nurse
Claire Bissex, Ward Clerk
Cristy Quillo, Healthcare Assistant
Czar Montecillo, Registered Nurse
Danelle Gorospe, Registered Nurse
David Gufigufi, Healthcare Assistant
Deborah Carrigan, Registered Nurse – Flow Coordinator
Delna Thomasm Registered Nurse
Dhanya Puthenparambil Mangalan, Registered Nurse
Doreena Sarich, Healthcare Assistant

Emma Neeley, Nurse Practitioner
Ella Prime, Registered Nurse
Eyla Sloan, Registered Nurse
Fenella Sands, Registered Nurse
Georgina Bryce, Registered Nurse
Gizelle May Arceo, Registered Nurse
Grace McInnes, Registered Nurse
Hannah Osbourne, Nurse Practitioner
Heather Wharehoka, Clinical Charge Nurse
Hilario Delgado, Registered Nurse
Himaniben Amin, Healthcare Assistant
Hope Alimnoyong, Registered Nurse
Jaclyn White, Registered Nurse
Jaisah Kim, Registered Nurse
Jay McCaffery, Registered Nurse
Jay Fuller, Paediatric Clinical Nurse Educator
Jazmine Harris Ulrich, Registered Nurse
Jean Classey, Associate Clinical Charge Nurse
Jean Moor, Clinical Coach
Jennifer Recana, Registered Nurse
Joanne Henty, Clinical Nurse Specialist
John Paul, Registered Nurse
Jonalyn Sales, Registered Nurse
Karthi Lekha, Registered Nurse
Kate Neil, Nurse Practitioner
Katherine Horner, Registered Nurse
Kathrina Calangi, Registered Nurse
Keegan Grove, Registered Nurse
Kristine Faith Oribe, Registered Nurse

Laura Moore, Registered Nurse
Letsy Wilson Pynadan, Registered Nurse
Lian D'Souza, Registered Nurse
Linda Agnew, Registered Nurse
Louise Mertens, Nurse Practitioner
Louise Scott, Registered Nurse – Flow Coordinator
Ma Cristina Tagoto, Healthcare Assistant
Maja Schutte, Registered Nurse
Maria Kharitonova, Registered Nurse
Marianne Teo, Registered Nurse
Maricar Almazan, Healthcare Assistant
Mark Santos, Registered Nurse
Mary Grace Aban, Registered Nurse
Melanie Bainbridge, Registered Nurse
Melencio Silveron, Registered Nurse
Melissa Le Sueur, Registered Nurse
Mieraf Gebreegziabher, Associate Clinical Charge Nurse
Nicola Hack, Clinical Nurse Specialist
Nicola Headifen, Clinical Nurse Specialist
Olivia Mount, Registered Nurse
Olivia McDonald, Registered Nurse
Patience Ndhlela, Registered Nurse
Patricia Arboledas Carrasco, Registered Nurse
Patrick Lagrosa, Registered Nurse
Pearl Nacario, Registered Nurse
Premeena Menezes, Registered Nurse
Premi Henry Raja Suresh, Registered Nurse
Prue Godbold, Registered Nurse

Ramon Villacarta, Registered Nurse
Rebecca O'Neill, Registered Nurse
Reena Vaity, Registered Nurse
Revita Aiza, Acute Care Practitioner
Robin Pecaoco, Registered Nurse
Romel Millan, Healthcare Assistant
Sharon Smith Franklin, Registered Nurse
Shona Jose, Registered Nurse
Simone Marsh, Healthcare Assistant
Simone Paterson, Registered Nurse
Sinead O'Malley, Associate Clinical Charge Nurse
Sue Esterhuizen, Ward Clerk
Sujeesh Panicker, Registered Nurse
Suzanne Peeperkorn, Associate Clinical Charge Nurse
Suzette Aguas, Healthcare Assistant
Syrel Castro, Healthcare Assistant
Tara Morley, Associate Clinical Charge Nurse
Victoria Lomas, Nurse Practitioner
Victoria Garrett, Registered Nurse
William Soriano, Acute Care Practitioner
Zoe Sosich, Registered Nurse
Jessica Conover, Registered Nurse
Karen Martinez, Registered Nurse
Edylyn Elumba, Healthcare Assistant