

## OUTER EAST



 There have been allegations of an overnight security risk at Maroondah Community Care Unit in Ringwood East.

### OUTER EAST

# Union alleges security risk at Maroondah Community Care Unit due to understaffed nurses

Kiel Egging, Maroondah Leader

July 3, 2018 12:00am

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EASTERN Health has denied it is understaffing its mental health care unit in Ringwood East despite concerns about inadequate overnight support and security.



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According to the union, one nurse is left in charge of the unit during various stages of the night shift when their co-worker goes on a meal break.

Staff then lock themselves in and ring emergency services if there is any danger.

According to [Eastern Health](#), the unit deals with adults “with a major mental illness and associated decline in psychosocial function”.

Union assistant state secretary Paul Healey described the arrangement as a “ludicrous situation”.

“Eastern Health senior management have admitted that at the Maroondah CCU there is a risk during meal breaks, but they are prepared to take that risk,” he said.

“When the senior staff member takes their meal break and there is an emergency, there isn’t adequate staffing on-the-spot to make considered decisions around code calls or additional medications to effectively de-escalate or investigate the wellbeing of other consumers.”

Mr Healey said there were no restrictions on patients coming and going from the facility and one patient had returned holding a meat cleaver on May 22.

He said the union had written to Mental Health Minister Martin Foley with its concerns.

Eastern Health director of mental health Lisa Shaw-Stuart said the unit was designed to give patients a level of independence and they could come and go as they pleased.

She said the unit was staffed with two nurses on each night shift and there was also additional security checks overnight.

“These staff members take their break at different times, ensuring there is staff coverage at the CCU across the evening,” she said.

Ms Shaw-Stuart said Eastern Health was “strongly committed to providing a safe workplace for our staff and a safe environment for patients and visitors.”

The office of Martin Foley did not provide an official response before deadline.



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