

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

NEWSLETTER #109 (31 May 09)

CAMPAIGN FOR A SEPARATE ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2009

The HSU Health Professionals Consultative Committee has completed the Health Professionals Draft Enterprise Agreement 2009 addressing the issues of recruitment and retention across all Health Professions.

On Thursday 28th May 2009, members of the Consultative Committee had a follow up meeting with the Minister of Industrial Relations regarding a separate agreement for health professionals.

Below is an overview of where the campaign is at and the next steps to take place.

All members are urged to get involved and discuss the campaign with their colleagues.

The first stage

The first stage of the campaign is now completed. Awareness of the issues is now widespread not only amongst Health Professionals but also amongst government officials, government agencies and departments, professional associations and other industrial organisations.

The Draft Agreement (attached) as developed by the Health Professional Consultative Committee includes:

- Wages & career structures;
- Recognition of post graduate qualifications;
- Support professional development pathways and continuing education funded by the employer;
- Adequate numbers of staff for the work required by health professionals;
- Pay parity with Eastern States and Tasmanian colleagues;
- Promotional opportunities;
- Retention bonuses for staff;

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- Student supervision allowances;
- Broad banding of classification structures;
- Conference & professional development leave;
- Support & allowances for colleagues who work in isolation;
- Support and recognition for professionals who are working in remote areas;
- Settlement & allowance for new staff moving from interstate and overseas.

The HSU encourages you to discuss and provide feedback by Email to hsuasa@bigpond.net.au, or to your local Consultative Committee Representative. If you do not know who your local representative is, please give me a call on 01419 036 615.

Please forward any comments by the COB on **Wednesday the 24th June 2009**. A meeting to endorse the Claims will be held on the week beginning **6th of July 2009 at 6pm**, venue to be advised.

At the mentioned meeting with the Minister of Industrial Relations, Hon Paul Caica, representatives of APESMA, the Consultative Committee and the HSU discussed our claim for a separate agreement.

The Minister reported that after consultation with the Minister of Health by his Department (of Health) and Public Sector Work Force Development from the Department of Premier and Cabinet; he was of the opinion that the current negotiating structures under the "South Australian Government Wages Parity (Salaried) Enterprise Agreement" had already the capacity to address the concerns of SA health professionals.

This is an unfortunate outcome as we know that health professionals have been and are being disadvantaged by a process that give little or no opportunity to negotiate or discuss the concerns and interests of Health Professionals.

Our next actions;

- Organise meetings at the work places,
- Designating action days,
- Work to your contract, etc

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- Endorsement of the Draft Enterprise Agreement 2009.
- Lodging the Log of Claim to relevant organisations and government departments.

What can you do?

Talk with your colleagues about the campaign, make sure they know about the Claim and what we are campaigning for. Get their commitment to be involved. In light of the Ministers response, health professionals can no longer afford to be just bystanders.

The Government will not simply hand over the outcome we need to make a real difference. We need to run a strong and well coordinated campaign and we need to stay focussed. Your actions and participation are vital to this campaign.

The unity of other health professions like ambulance officers, nurses and doctors have helped them to achieve their goals.

What will it take to get our requests heard by the government?

Here are some things we might need to do:

◆ **Be organised**

The first step in acting together on an issue is to organise yourselves. You will achieve next to nothing if you do not speak with one clear voice. Supporting your Workplace Reps is a good beginning. Figure out who is in the HSU and who isn't. Aim for 100% support. Work out what you can do to support the campaign. The HSU is here to help in getting there.

◆ **Pick an option**

What options we choose depends on the circumstances and may include one or more of the following:

Attention Grabbers

As simple as all participants wearing the same colour of shirts, clothing or ribbons. You get the idea? We can also make badges to wear. Distribute fliers around your workplace, for example **“Waiting list? The government doesn't care, Health Professionals do”** and outline why they don't care.


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Maybe organise a “special day”, say “Over worked and Underpaid Day” “The government under value my work Day”, where everyone can bring a plate, and share lunch Just because we have problem to solve doesn’t mean we can’t have fun doing it!

◆ **Start Work**

The idea is that all of you meet about 10 minutes before you start work. You march into work together, preferably in a public noisy sort of way! A Start Work is also a good opportunity to meet and update each other on the campaign. If you like, make up simple placards, get some cheap whistles, make some noise going in!

◆ **Work to your Contract**

It is every employee’s duty to work to their contract of employment. The actual duties you should do in your position are part of your contract and are written in your Job Description.

Working to your contract means:

- * Work strictly to your Job Description.
- * Read and understand your letter of appointment and Job Description and only perform the duties in it. You should ask for written instructions for each and every other duty you are requested to perform.

◆ **Require notice of change**

Require a month notice for any change. Also require negotiations of any change.

◆ **Stop all unpaid work**

Stop working for nothing by stopping all the unpaid work outside of your normal rostered hours unless your employer directs you in writing to do overtime for which you will be paid.

◆ **Only respond to written instructions**

You can seek written clarification of any lawful management instruction.

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- ◆ **Withdraw from committees**

Participation in most committees is voluntary, for example, Laboratory accreditation, building projects, OH&S committees etc.

- ◆ **Work to rule**

This is the next step from working to your contract. In effect it is applying bans of some sort, like no over time. It is important to ensure that a work to rule will have some real effect, otherwise you may need to consider applying work bans. The effectiveness of work to rule is also determined by how many people take part.

- ◆ **Work bans**

The easy way to put it is: pick a task everyone does, and don't do it. It may be the task is unsafe and you should not do it anyway. Excessive workload falls into this category. It maybe that it is the task that is the source of the problem and you make your point that way. It may be a ban on management reports. The choice would be to inconvenience management, create a problem for them to solve. We would recommend avoiding inconveniencing patients, but anything that inconvenienced management would be a fair game.

It may well be the case that creating a short term crisis will be better for your patients in the long run as you may get extra resources.

- ◆ **Stop Work Meetings**

A stop work meeting is usually the final step before more serious industrial action. A well attended Stop Work Meeting is a clear signal to your employer that you mean business.

- ◆ **Strikes**

A scary and serious word! A strike is a stoppage usually half a day or longer. It is the ultimate weapon in the arsenal, and should be used sparingly. You will all need to be angry enough and committed enough for a strike to succeed. Again it is important to signal your employer that you intend to strike so that there is time for **negotiations**.

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If these fail you must be prepared to strike, and your employer must know you are serious. As with Stop Work meetings you need to weigh up what you will potentially gain against what you will lose.

You can:

Make a start on getting your workplace organised by supporting your staff representatives and the HSU.

Some facts about the EB 2009

- ◆ The 2006 EB expires at the end of 2009
- ◆ Negotiations for the 2009 enterprise agreement will commence in September this year.
- ◆ The tactic of including health professionals in the South Australian Government Wages Parity (Salaried) Enterprise Agreement has created disadvantage to health professionals over the years.
- ◆ All other States in Australia have negotiated separate enterprise agreements for health professionals in order to address attraction and retention issues.
- ◆ The Government claims to negotiate in good faith, yet, they have wasted an opportunity to create a fair industrial instrument that value health professionals.

Do we just stand by the Minister of Industrial Relations' response to our request?

For up to date information call Jorge Navas at the HSU on 0419 036 615 or email to hsuasa@bigpond.net.au.

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