

## **Dental Services Meeting Minutes:**

10/03/2022

### **Introduction of Industrial Officers (Health Professionals)**

- The HSU has invested into additional resources for Health Professionals through the recruitment of two additional Industrial Officers that will specifically look after Health Professionals.

### **Award Reform Campaign**

- Members raised concerns in relation to the current Awards being outdated, unfit for purpose and inconsistent with their classifications. The issues raised included:
  - Inadequate remuneration – level of professionalism and ethics expected of dental assistants is way too high in comparison to the remuneration paid.
  - Limited progression – inability to move from grade 1 and 2 even if certificate 4 has been completed. Award should be structured in a way where staff that meet the necessary qualifications can move grades automatically
  - Unfit for purpose – scope of practice has changed since the last award negotiation and the current award does not align with the work that members perform.
  - Lack of consistency in policies and operationality between the LHD's.
- Members suggested the following in relation to the Award reform process:
  - Working groups should be established to effectively gather members' feedback.
  - Members in the working group can assist with drafting clauses as well as propose necessary changes.
- The HSU intends to modernise the Awards to be more reflective of members classifications and address the issues and concerns members experience within their workplace.
- The first stage in this process is collecting feedback from members and collating this information prior to developing a plan for resolving members concerns in relation to the award.
- HSU will be releasing a survey for Interpreters to gather feedback on award issues members believe need to be addressed.
- Survey results will form a part of the log of claims for the award reform process and will be used as a form of evidence to highlight that the current award is out of date and unfit for purpose.

### **Current Challenges to the Award Reform Process**

- Currently the wages policy (2.5% cap to wage increases) is a significant challenge in trying to reform the Award. However, the feedback gathered from the survey will be used to develop a plan as well as strategies targeted specially at addressing the concerns of our Interpreters.

- HSU will be using political and industrial leavers to improve working conditions for Health Professionals.

### **Other issues**

Members also raised other issues they are currently experiencing within their workplace. These issues included:

- Understaffing issues across the sector particularly in regional and rural areas- Dental Assistants are expected to cover staff at very short notice but there is no permanent resolution of understaffing issues. In some areas staff are expected to cover regional sites as a response to managing short staffing.
- Difficulty in recruiting staff.
- Dental Officers in rural areas are expected to complete work that is otherwise completed by a Dental Assistant in addition to their own work due to limited resources/staffing.
- Level of care and quality of service provided to a patient is incredibly compromised due to increased workload.
- Expected to work excess hours.
- No access to fleet cars - members are required to travel to different worksites and transport equipment to different sites in their own vehicle. Some members are not paid travel allowance.
- Leave - Unable to take leave. Members are required to put in their leave 12 months in advance.

The HSU would like to remind members that the Union has a dedicated and experienced industrial team that is able to assist members who have any local problems at their workplace. Please contact your workplace representative and organiser or speak to a representative from our Member Services Division by calling 1300 478 679.