

## **State-wide Interpreters Meeting Minutes:**

03/03/2022

### **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- Members raised concerns in relation to the current Awards being outdated, unfit for purpose and inconsistent with their classifications.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 Interpreters is way too high in comparison to the remuneration paid.
  - Accreditation requirements – all Interpreters must be NAATI certified to be able to practice as an Interpreter. Every 3 years, the accreditation must be renewed, and costs associated with reaccreditation must be paid by workers.
  - No access to automatic pay rise.
  - Distinction between sessional Interpreters and non-sessional Interpreters-covered under a different award.
  - Lack of consistency in policies and operationality between the LHD's.
- 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of claims for the award reform process and will be used as a form of evidence to highlight that the current award is out of date and unfit for purpose.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:

- Return to the workplace- work from home arrangements are no longer available within some LHD's. Required to work from the office again despite WFH arrangement proven to be beneficial and productive.
- Poor ventilation within offices.
- Inadequate office space- small office provided to Interpreters where there is more than 1 Interpreter in the room, making it difficult to hear the patient. Interpreters often need to leave the room to be able to understand what is being said by the patient. This is also a breach of patient privacy.
- Shift from face-to-face Interpreter services and increased usage of online or over the phone services. Providing services online makes it incredibly difficult for vulnerable patients such as the elderly to use the online service and communicate effectively.
- Inability to work overtime.
- Increased usage of TIS (an external third-party agency)- takes away the number of shifts available to Interpreters.

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.