

State-wide Physiotherapist Meeting Minutes:

11/04/2022

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.

HSU Stop Work Action:

- Physiotherapist showed their support for the HSU stop work action and emphasised that it was a necessary step towards better working conditions, remuneration and recognition for the work that health professionals do.

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- Members raised concerns in relation to the current Awards being outdated, unfit for purpose and inconsistent with their classifications.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:
 - Insert research pathway - there is no career pathway available in the current award for clinicians to do research.
 - Levels within the award – the levels that some physiotherapists are employed under do not reflect their level of experience. For example, employed at level 2 despite having 30 years of clinical experience.
 - Short term contracts – graduate physiotherapists are offered short term contracts which increases job insecurity. Limited FTE roles are advertised throughout the year making it difficult to secure full-time employment. Level 2 and 3 physiotherapists have to continuously re-apply for their jobs.
- The HSU intends to modernise the Awards to be more reflective of members classifications and address the issues and concerns physiotherapists experience within their workplace.
- The first stage in this process is collecting feedback from members and collating this information.
- HSU will be releasing a survey for physiotherapists to gather feedback on award issues members believe need to be addressed.
- Survey results will form 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of claims for the award reform process and will be used as a form of evidence to highlight that the current award is out of date and unfit for purpose.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:

- Increased workload and extensive patient waiting list.
- Follow-up calls for rehabilitation consume significant time of physiotherapists and takes away therapy time for patients.
- Physiotherapists are required to complete additional duties which are outside of their position description. This has been an issue over the last 7 to 8 years.
- Increased reliance on telehealth due to COVID-19 – seeing 40-50 patients a week as it's an entirely new assessment.
- Staffing levels – understaffing is a state-wide issue.
- Lack of funding for FTE- there is limited funding for recruitment of additional staff due to the on-going issue of services being merged with other health streams.

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 issues at their workplace.

If you are impacted by understaffing issues at your worksite, please inform your local Organiser or HSU industrial team. Your local Organiser can do a site visit and assist you with your work-related issues.

For individual workplace disputes, please contact the HSU Member Services Division on 1300 478 679 to speak to a representative.