Opal EA Goes to the Vote: Time to have your say

Dear Member,

As you know, the HSU has been in negotiations with Opal Aged Care for a new enterprise agreement. This bargaining process has been completed and it is time for staff to have their say.

On 22\(^{nd}\) June staff will be provided with access to the voting document, educational material around the new agreement, as well as information on how to vote. There are also information sessions for staff to attend at each facility.

The voting period is from 30 June 2016 and closes on 4 July 2016.

The proposed agreement includes:

- 3 year Agreement with an expiry date 30 June 2019
- Wage increases:
  - 2.4% first full pay period 1/7/16
  - 2 % first full pay period 1/7/17
  - 2 % first full pay period 1/7/18
- Uniform and laundry allowance the same for non-nursing staff as nursing staff

For example: Currently, if an ACE employee works a 7-hour shift then they would only be paid $1.49 uniform allowance. Under the new Enterprise Agreement when a staff member works a 7-hour shift they will be paid $2.73.

Currently, if an ACE employee works 7 hours they would be paid $0.38 for the shift. Under the new enterprise agreement when an ACE staff member works a 7-hour shift they will be paid $0.98.

- Insertion of wording to reflect that staff can take 5 single days as annual leave
- Inclusion of an Opal Standard Roster clause
- Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment clause
- Special Disaster Leave clause: 3 paid days per year
- Domestic Violence clause
- Transition to Retirement clause
- Updated current clauses as necessary for certification with Fair Work Commission
The HSU was concerned about what we see as a low pay offer of 2% per year for 2017 and 2018. The Union sought that Opal consider a revised offer in particular as the minimum wage increase effective for the 1st July 2016 was 2.4%. Opal responded that the factors they considered in determining wage increases for their staff was the current CPI rate of 1.3% and also the Liberal Government’s significant $1.2 billion cut to Aged Care Funding. The funding cuts in particular will have a significant impact on their business over the next couple of years. They stood firm to their pay offer advising that while they want to provide their staff with good terms and conditions of employment, they also need to ensure that they are providing their staff with long term sustainable employment.

We urge all members to attend information sessions, ask as many questions as necessary and to read the proposed enterprise agreement closely prior to voting. Wherever possible HSU organisers will visit Opal sites during the voting period.

If you require further assistance please call the Member Services Division on 1300 478 679.

In unity,

[Signature]

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT