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WWCC boycott turns personal – and it's still on

The CE put out personal a video message to staff a little while ago suggesting that NSW paramedics should be the only paramedics in the country to have to fund the cost of the WWCC.

Some of his key points are: that the public deserve to know that paramedics can be trusted to work with children; 60% of the workforce have a WWCC; and lastly, that some paramedics and their families are about to be uprooted from their home and shipped out to cover for the paramedics who are boycotting the fee.

We believe 50% of paramedics don't have the paid check (just as the Minister said), and therefore NSW won't be able to function on 1 July. And the fact that the CE is using threats of forced transfers as intimidation tactics to divide us shows how desperate the situation has become for government. He asserts that the public should have trust in paramedics – and we agree.

Paramedics want the public to have confidence that they are cleared to work with children. That is why ADHSU members have no objection to getting the check. Paramedics are not refusing the check, just the \$80 tax on employment. Government has two choices: it can pay the \$80 to cover the cost of the check (like happens in every other state and territory in Australia), or allow paramedics to work with the volunteer check, which is the same as the paid check, but free.

In order to show we have nothing to fear from the check, we recommend HSU paramedics get the volunteer check between now and 30 June. It's important to fill out all fields correctly, just tick the box for volunteer work rather than paid employment. Then present to the RMS with your ID **but do not pay the \$80**.

It is vital to remember that at this point under the government's current restrictive law it is illegal to work with a volunteer check. That is, they'll still need to stand down thousands of paramedics if and when the next deadline passes.

The CE's message to you is that government will not fund an increase to pay you an extra \$80 every five years. Of course, that's rich coming from an executive who is by and large exempt from the wages regulation. It is illegal for paramedics to receive a pay rise (including an allowance to cover the cost of the WWCC) above 2.5%. Not so for the CE. As a senior executive he can receive a discretionary increase above base remuneration, progression through the band over time based on performance (performance pay), market adjustments, and a work value increase (at his own initiative or the Secretary of Health's). Senior Executives then receive the 2.5% on top of those previous increases.

This WWCC fee fight is essential for two main reasons: one, it's not okay for an employer to demand money from a staff member in order to stay employed, and two, this is essentially a fight against the government sector wages regulation. The government can change the wages regulation and pay the \$80 or close stations down on July 1. It's their call.

In unity,

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD