

TCH: Game Back On

Dear Member,

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) are a powerful role in the workplace and have the capacity to create enormous change. This role allows nominated representatives to identify health and safety issues, notify the employer and even order workers to cease work in unsafe situations.

Repeated attempts to hold discussions around the formation of work groups for Wardspersons were blocked. Workers, angry at the obvious lack of respect pushed through and met at six different times, with more than 40 in attendance overall. The employer has repeatedly indicated a lack of interest in the HSR role, but this outcome indicated otherwise.

The structure below was tabled (highlighted text had already been agreed to):

Proposed Structure – Wardspersons (Workers)

Work Group	Staff Count	Current HSRs	Proposed HSRs (including current)	Vacant HSRs for Election
Wardsperson	107	0	3	3
Hospital Assistants	88	2	3	1
Ward Clerks/Patient Admissions	69 (64+5)	1	2	1
Central Equipment	14	1	1	0
Total	278	4	9	4

After the meetings, the following work groups were decided upon for the following reasons:

Work Group (Wardsperson)

Work Group	Additional Need	Number
Block/Building 3/Maternity	Size of the area covered	2
ED/ICU/Mental Health	Additional risk due to Code Black requirement	1
Theatres	Additional risk due to exposure to surgical procedures	1
Transport/Imaging	Specific duties	1
Nightshift	Additional strain due to working nights	1
12-hour-roster	Additional considerations given length of roster	1
Total		7

On 23 May 2018 union officials met with your employer to raise concerns. The HSU provided examples of inappropriate behaviour and the impact on the ability to connect with members, as well as the impact on the morale of employees.

The structure was provided, with a request for *at least* six separate Work Groups. Your employer will collaborate with Health and Safety to ensure appropriate representation for Wardspersons. This more reasonable response is both welcomed and refreshing after many months battling to be heard. Once a formal

response is received, members will be notified. The process of nominating HSRs begins and then elections are run.

Those elected will undertake five days of training, which will give workers the power to raise health and safety issues and finally have them addressed. Given the valuable contribution of Wardspersons it makes sense. The outcome is an entire department with functioning HSRs and a safer work environment.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Hayes', with a long, sweeping underline.

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD