

Ruthless HealthShare fights dirty to save a buck

HSU has been in the IRC on several matters relating to PTOs in recent days: firstly on Infectious Cleaning, and secondly on the ongoing Crib Away allowance battle.

Infectious Cleaning Allowance

HealthShare sent in five highly paid executives and hired one of Sydney's leading employer barristers to defend against our claim that PTOs either get paid the Infectious Cleaning Allowance, or they don't have to clean the vehicle after transporting an infectious patient. It was quite a sight: five executives on six figure incomes, all in the IRC hoping that their expensive legal team will cut the pay of their low paid workers.

We believe we have a reasonable chance of success on this issue. The Commissioner 'reserved' his decision, meaning he has gone away to consider the evidence and write up a decision. Usually decisions take around 8 weeks to be handed down. If we are successful, we have argued our members should be paid back pay for each occasion they have dealt with an infectious patient.

Crib Away Allowance

HSU appeared in the IRC on Wednesday to continue the ongoing battle to achieve an allowance for each time PTOs are required to dine away from base. This part of the process was meant to allow for the parties to sit down and decide whether or not the HSU had found enough savings to fund the allowance (we have). Unfortunately, the government continues to fight dirty and purposely threw up new barriers to disrupt the conciliation conference. By disrupting the process government has achieved yet another delay, and the matter is now going to be set down for a two-day hearing before the full bench in October.

We believe government is misusing the court process to drain union funds, while at the same time continuing to financially penalise our members by not passing on the 2.5% pay rises. It's dirty.

Of course, trade unions don't like backing out of a fight, so we will battle on. We understand that PTOs are doing it tough financially and would like the pay rises. However, we believe it's worth continuing on for another couple months given we have come so far and we are confident of victory.

We will keep you informed of any further developments.

Stuart Hatter
Divisional Manager Ambulance