

## Dealing with difficult residents

Dear Member,

Ask any aged care worker if they have had to deal with violent behaviours from residents, and most will have a few tales to tell. For too long now, aged care workers have almost been expected to accept violence from residents as simply 'part of the job'. But the truth is, aged care workers are no different to any other worker in this country. Your employer has a responsibility to provide a safe workplace for you. This includes one free of assaults, where each resident is regularly assessed for the health and safety hazards they present, in consultation with you and your workmates.

The HSU has held discussions with management at Autumn Lodge regarding workplace assaults from residents. Management has responded positively. The HSU has also provided management with a copy of a cease work notice. A cease work notice is a document to be served on any employer, if you have a reasonable concern that to carry out a certain task would expose you to a serious risk to your health or safety, emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard. This can include refusing to provide care to a known violent resident, especially where a known violent resident has previously injured you, or your workmates.

A copy of the cease work notice is attached to this email. While management are working towards a safer workplace, if you feel the threat of resident violence you are advised to sign the attached cease work notice and present it to management. Members should make themselves available to do alternative work that is safe, or they risk losing income. It is illegal for management to dock your pay or otherwise victimise you, if you cease unsafe work in this manner.

Once you have informed your management of your reasonable concern of being assaulted by a violent resident, management, or even a SafeWork NSW Inspector, cannot order you back to work with the resident you have nominated as causing your reasonable concern. What they must do instead is to reach agreement with you over how to make the nominated unsafe work as safe as is reasonably possible. You also have the right to be represented in such discussions by your HSU Organiser.

If you have any questions you should contact the HSU immediately on 1300 478 679. If you are not already a member now is the time. This is just another example of HSU supporting members through difficult times. Support the union that is supporting you by [joining online here](#), or call our membership team on 1300 HSU NSW.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes  
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD

