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Report back to members re 2.5% wage rise delay

We have received many questions from members regarding the potential delay in the upcoming 2.5% wage rise.

ADHSU representatives attended the IRC on Wednesday to hear the APA Executive's application for an over 2.5% pay rise through a major industrial case.

A major industrial case (MIC) differs from an ordinary case because it is expected to be complex and deal with important issues for the jurisdiction of the Commission. They are ordinarily heard by a full bench with at least 5 hearing days.

The last MIC involving NSW Ambulance was the 2008 Award case. That case came from a claim filed in 2006 and 2007 for variations to the award and in 2008 had 21 hearing days. That case is significant also for the IRC undertaking a 'BlueScope' arbitration that, in the interests of being dealt with quickly, came back with changes to the award which no-one had asked for – perhaps most notoriously the elimination of late meal call off. It's understandable that ADHSU members are hesitant about going down that path again.

We will run a vote of ADHSU members when the time comes; however, in the interim we are carefully considering the approach we should take to the MIC application that has just been made. ADHSU's firm position is that members should never again be expected to trade off conditions for a pay rise. Our concerns about trade-offs in this MIC will need to be addressed at some stage.

Our other main concern is that members will be required to forgo any pay rise whatsoever while the MIC and related appeals continue. However, there is a current application before the IRC which we support, that the MoH consents to pay the 2.5% as well as agreeing to have the major industrial case proceed. Early indications are they are plan on saying no.

So at this stage we'll make sure we do not obstruct APA's claim. However, we will seek guidance, via a vote, as to what ADHSU members would like. Some of the options include going down the MIC path, risking some trade-offs, and potentially missing out on pay rises throughout the process (but with the possibility of receiving an above 2.5% pay rise); or continuing with our newly formed alliance with the other emergency services unions and campaign to get rid of the wages policy (it will take all four unions campaigning very hard; however, getting rid of the wages policy opens the door to professional wages and better conditions without trade-offs).

We are going to send a series of newsletters over the next few weeks to keep ADHSU members informed without overloading you with too much information at once. That way, when it comes time to vote, you will have the best opportunity to make the right decision for you and your colleagues.

Stuart Hatter
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