

SESLHD Staff Amenities

Dear Member,

As members may be aware, the HSU has been making representations to your LHD, seeking to enforce your rights under the Award to negotiate staff amenities as part of the redevelopment to occur at your hospital.

New developments should be a great opportunity to improve the amenities for patients, visitors and staff. Unfortunately, many new developments have failed to improve staff amenities, or in some cases, have actually resulted in worse staff amenities.

Whether it is a failure to provide for a staff dining room, lack of toilets/lockers/showers, lack of accessible childcare or unappealing work environments without natural light, experience has shown that staff amenities can fall off the priority list.

That is why staff need a strong voice in any discussions about new developments.

Despite a written request, so far your employer has not agreed to negotiate for the staff amenities in the this new development.

Hopefully this failure to agree to negotiate is not due to a lack of respect towards staff more broadly and is just a misunderstanding of the Award requirements.

Please see attached correspondence reinforcing this previous request.

Members can be reassured that your union representatives will continue to pursue these issues and will seek to enforce your Award entitlements through all legal avenues.

We can only enforce workplace rights for HSU members. Encourage your workmates to join online at www.hsu.asn.au/join or phone 1300 478 679. We are stronger together.

In unity,



Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD

21 January 2020

Mr Tobi Wilson
Chief Executive
SESLHD
Locked Bag 88
Randwick
NSW 2031

Dear Mr Wilson

By email: tobi.wilson@health.nsw.gov.au

Following our request to enforce the Award Clause in relation staff amenities:

Where major additions to presently occupied buildings or new buildings are erected within a presently constituted hospital, the amenities to be provided in such additions or new buildings shall be the subject of negotiations between the parties.

Some employers have requested further detail about the concerns that the HSU has in relation to staff amenities.

Ensuring Award Entitlements

Ensuring Award entitlements are adhered to in relation to negotiating staff amenities is a key reason behind wanting to enforce the Award entitlement to conduct negotiations. New builds have a track record of causing and/or also provide possible solution/s to current and/or future Award breaches in relation to staff amenities. The earliest possible transparency and negotiation around staff amenities would seem to be the most cost effective, less disruptive and most sensible way to ensure Award compliance.

Award breach/concerns include:

Ensuring the Award entitlement to negotiate staff amenities is a key concern in itself. Having a voice in the staff amenities available for staff by the staff affected is a key entitlement that the HSU is seeking to enforce. The Award entitlement is clear, negotiations between the parties must occur. Any discussion and agreement should purely be about how the negotiations should be carried out in line with good faith negotiation principles.

Staff Dining Rooms is a major concern and one that has often been negatively impacted in the process of new building/redevelopments. These concerns include the failure to provide staff with a staff dining room or not providing sufficient seating for all staff who may have a



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break at any one time and/or not providing heating and cooling facilities etc. Some Hospitals have abolished a separate staff dining room all together and required staff to use general public areas of retail food facilities. This clearly fails to provide staff with enough seating and puts staff at risk of interacting with clients during break times etc.

Other Award entitlements breached or at risk of being breached in new developments include the provision of staff toilets (e.g. often not sufficient single sex toilets as the Award stipulate), lockers (e.g. not sufficient lockers for all staff), change rooms/showers (e.g. not sufficient and/or not accessible to staff) and access to Rest Rooms as per the Award entitlement.

Accessible Child Care is also an issue that can be affected, addressed and/or improved as part of a redevelopment process. Clause 36 of the Health Employees Conditions of Employment Award states:

The parties agree to work together to examine methods of addressing the childcare needs of employees.

A redevelopment process is a logical opportunity to review and takes to steps to address the childcare needs of employees and a negotiation process with the representative of those employees would be a critical step in seeking to address those needs.

A Healthy Built Environment

Given we spend one third of our lives at work, the working environment can have a significant impact on our health and wellbeing.

(<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+communities/workplaces/for+business>)

NSW Health is itself a proponent of creating a healthy built environment. Though the healthy built environment entails a range of issues (e.g. access to healthy food, access to exercise and a non-polluted environment), a key concern is related to opportunities for social interaction and community connectivity.

The NSW Health website states:

Opportunities for social interaction and community connectivity

There are strong links between good health, a sense of community and social interaction. The built environment can foster a sense of community through enabling day to day interaction with people and nature in safe and accessible environments:

- green and open spaces facilitate contact with nature as well as community.

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/urbanhealth/Pages/default.aspx#opportunities>

Many HSU covered staff working in Public Health appear to be working in built environments that do not encourage or facilitate a healthy lifestyle and/or social interaction. Whether it is the abolishment of central staff dining rooms (e.g. resulting in staff typically eating at their desk/workstation) and or the workspaces (e.g. typically environmental services, kitchens etc.) working in cramped environments with no natural light, a Healthy Built environment is a key issue that should be explored and addressed through a negotiation process.

Improving and Updating Staff Amenities

Though ensuring Award entitlements are adhered as part of any new development is a key concern, improving and updating staff amenities is key reason for commencing negotiations with the redevelopments and/or development of new buildings. As society changes, so do the type, style and preferences of staff for staff amenities change. Examples may include access to health-related facilities (e.g. gyms, yoga/Pilates rooms), prayer facilities, accessible facilities for bike storage, dining rooms with different/improved cooking facilities, childcare facilities and opportunities for relaxation and/or social interaction.

A negotiation process entered into by the HSU is of course seeking to improve staff amenities beyond the legal/Award minimum. A genuine negotiation process, conducted utilizing good faith negotiation principles, would aim for the parties to work together to create healthy and happy work environments that would improve both the life of HSU members and the productivity of the entire Health system.

As we have already requested the commencement of negotiations in relation to staff amenities in your LHD, we would ask that you provide a response by COB 28 January, 2020 as to whether you agree to commence negotiations with the HSU for the staff amenities in the new/re developments occurring in your LHD.

A failure to respond or an unsatisfactory response is likely to result in a notification of a dispute in accordance with the Award.

Please respond by email to glenn.pead@hsu.asn.au or phone Glen on 0408 740 434.

Sincerely



Gerard Hayes
Secretary
HSU NSW/ACT/QLD