

Campaign update #39

Mental health nurses agreement approved - new pay rates to start

1. Fair Work Commission approves agreement

On Thursday 20 April the Fair Work Commission approved the public sector mental health nurses agreement.

The Victorian Public Mental Health Services Enterprise Agreement will become operational in seven days on Thursday 27 April.

You can view the new agreement at anmfvic.asn.au/mha16

Thank you to all members who supported this campaign, came to meetings, took industrial action, wrote to Mental Health Minister Martin Foley, spoke out on social media and wore the red T-shirt. Your support of public general sector nurses and midwives was also vital as much of this agreement is a mirror of the wages and conditions secured in their agreement.

As a result of your ANMF claims and your campaign you have also secured an additional 125.8 mental health nursing EFT positions - the most significant increase of additional mental health nurses in the history of your enterprise bargaining history. This is a major step towards removing some of the historical barriers people with a mental illness face when accessing speciality nursing care.

The new positions include an additional 108 EFT mental health nursing positions to directly assist with workload in mental health bed-based services and an additional 17.8 mental health nursing EFT for Thomas Embling House to provide clinical support and assist with early intervention and de-escalation measures.

We share your frustration at how long this process has taken and we thank you for your support and patience during this time.

2. Pay rises

The new pay rates are effective from the first pay period on or after 27 April 2017. You can check your new pay rates in the agreement at anmfvic.asn.au/mha16

Members are encouraged to contact their pay roll department to confirm when the new pay rates and associated back pay will be paid.

Members will be entitled to the following:

1. the October 2016 pay rise, which includes rolling the CPD allowance into the base hourly rate and then the 3 per cent is applied
2. the April 2017 3 per cent pay rise
3. the good faith payment (see below point 3).

Members will be aware further increases during the life of the agreement are 3.25 per cent in April 2018 and between four and 26.72 per cent in April 2019 (depending on classification) replicating the Victorian public general nurses and midwives agreement and to reach net pay parity with NSW nurses and midwives.

Members should be aware all of your back pay may not be paid in one pay period. ANMF is liaising with the Victorian Hospitals' and Industrial Association to confirm employers' timeframes for processing the above three back payments.

ANMF will update members as soon as we are provided with more information about the timing of back pay. In the meantime check with your human resources or pay roll office.

3. Good faith payment

Clause 60 of the agreement allows for a one-off good faith payment based on 1.5 per cent of mental health nurses' total annual remuneration including salary and allowances as at the commencement of this agreement. This will be calculated on the following:

1. the period for calculating the one-off good faith payment is the 12 months preceding the expiration of the employee's last pay period before the new rates of pay become operable (from the first full pay period on or after 1 October 2016);
2. total annual remuneration is to include all payments made to the employee during this period including base rates, allowances, penalties and overtime.
3. each employee will be advised in writing of the total annual remuneration sum and the one off good faith payment sum at the time of payment.

Employers should now also make this payment.

4. Implementation

ANMF Organisers will be busy re-establishing Workplace Implementation Committees (WICs) to monitor and assess the implementation of the substantial changes in the new agreement. WICs comprise equal employer and ANMF representation which include ANMF staff and ANMF Job Reps.

This work will include recruiting additional nursing staff over the life of the agreement to fulfil the new staged nursing numbers, implementation of the community workload management system, development of confidential protocols to access 20 days paid family violence leave, mandated nurse to HDU-bed ratios, workplace health and safety clauses based on ANMF's 10-point plan, and a comprehensive consultation clause. It will also include all of the nursing specific improved conditions ANMF achieved in the general nurses and midwives EBA that have been included in the mental health agreement.