

Campaign update #20 public sector mental health enterprise agreement

26 MAY 2016



Awash in red. ANMF members at Mercy Mental Health (Wyndham Team), Mildura Community Health and Auburn House.

Day 8 of protected industrial action – spread the red

1. Status of mental health EBA negotiations and back-pay

Negotiations were held for a further seven hours on Wednesday 25 May between the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Victorian Hospitals' Industrial Association (VHIA), Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) and the ANMF (Vic Branch).

The DHHS has appointed former Fair Work Commission deputy president Greg Smith to facilitate mental health bargaining negotiations starting on Friday 27 May. Mr Smith had an integral role assisting the parties to reach agreement over eight days in the general public sector nurses and midwives negotiations. Mr Smith has considerable experience facilitating and progressing agreements between the parties and the ANMF is excited about this next stage of the negotiations. Tomorrow's six-hour meeting will include a review of VHIA's alternative proposal for workload management in the community setting tabled on Wednesday. ANMF has provided preliminary feedback and looks forward to progressing this combined ANMF and HACSU claim.

Mr Smith will facilitate further meetings scheduled for 1, 2, 8, 9, 15 and 16 June. ANMF remains concerned negotiations are only scheduled twice weekly for the next three weeks due to the unavailability of representatives from other parties. The Victorian Government has made it clear it will not pay back-pay unless agreements are resolved without undue delay following the old agreement's expiry date. The public sector mental health nurses agreement expired on 31 March 2016.

ANMF is available day and night, seven days a week, to negotiate and resolve this agreement. We call on the other parties to do the same. ANMF's aim is to negotiate an improved agreement with wages comparable to the general public sector nurses and midwives and improved workloads. ANMF does not want to jeopardise the back pay commencement date of 1 April.

[Click here to read your ANMF mental health nurses log of claims](#)

2. Employers not supporting your mental health nursing claims

The VHIA is reporting that employers are not supporting a number of ANMF members' mental health specific claims. This is disappointing as these critical nursing claims were developed to ensure that people can access mental health nursing care when they are acutely unwell.

Employers are also opposing replacement of community mental health nurses with mental health nurses and are refusing to agree to clauses that would ensure maintenance of existing nursing levels. This response is inconsistent with the emerging

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evidence on chronic illness and the alarming early death rates amongst people with mental illness. ANMF understands and has argued that, in reality, it is **within the nursing scope** to intervene. People accessing mental health services do not deserve less certainty about ongoing access to specialist nursing care.

Employers are also refusing to insert a clause requiring a Nurse Unit Manager for each clinical ward or unit. This does not appear to be a cost saving position as any ward or unit that does not have a Nurse Unit Manager (NUM) is currently required to pay all of the Associate Nurse Unit Managers (ANUM) at the NUM rate.

3. Getting our message heard

Are you currently working within a public healthcare inpatient unit? Do you feel comfortable explaining the intricacies and challenges of your role to the public? If so, the ANMF would love to feature you discussing mental health ratios within our upcoming video campaign materials. Media training is provided, and we will ensure you are protected for advocating for your profession. If you're interested, please drop us an email with your full name, role and some suitable times for us to follow up over the phone. Email us at media@anmfvic.asn.au

4. Spread the red – get involved to ensure our communities can access mental health nurses

Update your social media profile pic and share our posts and your pics. Participating Area Mental Health Services (wards, units and community teams) have been awash with red since Thursday 19 May 2016 sending a strong message to employers that fair pay and safe workloads are critical issues for mental health nurses.

ANMF encourages members, including those employed at facilities unable to take protected industrial action, to get active on social media. Visit the ANMF Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RespectOurWork and look through our album of campaign profile and banner images you can use on your Facebook and Twitter accounts. Share your red T-shirt imagery online using the hashtags #ValueRecogniseReward, #MHRatios, #RewardMHNurses for Twitter and Instagram. You can also post your photos to the ANMF Facebook page, or tag us on Twitter [@ANMFVicBranch](https://twitter.com/ANMFVicBranch)

If you are not seeing ANMF's Facebook posts, change your settings to 'see first' and please share ANMF posts about the action and the issues that are important to you.

5. Campaign T-shirts and information

Red #ValueRecogniseReward campaign T-shirts are available for members at ANMF House (540 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne) between 8.45am and 5pm on weekdays or online at <http://anfvic.myshopify.com>

Campaign posters and a 'Dear patient/client' campaign letter are available to download from the EBA 2016 campaign page <http://anmfvic.asn.au/eba2016#mh>

'Demand nursing ratios in mental health' campaign stickers are available through your Job Representative/Organiser.

6. What is the protected industrial action and who can take it?

ANMF (Vic Branch) members began protected industrial action in twelve Area Mental Health Services across the state from 7am Thursday 19 May 2016. The protected industrial action that commenced is as follows:

"Delaying or restricting the performance of normal duties by explaining to clients and other visitors during working hours the purpose of the campaign materials being worn by nurses including t-shirts, stickers and campaign posters.

Delaying or restricting the performance of normal duties by displaying and distributing campaign material in the workplace and speaking to the media as required during working hours."

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Members are advised that the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) notified a number of employers that its members commenced protected industrial action on Friday 20 May 2016.

We have received queries from some members who have been asked whether they will undertake the work not completed by work colleagues as a result of their colleagues' protected industrial action. ANMF (Vic Branch) members should continue to implement our protected industrial action and continue to perform your **normal contractual duties and responsibilities**. Any additional industrial action undertaken by ANMF (Vic Branch) members beyond the industrial action outlined above is not protected industrial action.

Please contact ANMF Information Line on 9275 9333 or your ANMF Organiser if your employer is placing requests on ANMF members to undertake additional work that is not completed by colleagues and we will arrange an urgent members meeting at your workplace.

7. Workplaces where protected industrial action CAN commence from 7.00am Thursday 19 May 2016 (stage 1):

Albury Wodonga Health North East Border Mental Health Services All areas where mental health nurses are employed	Goulburn Valley Health All areas where mental health nurses are employed	Mildura Base Hospital Mental Health Services All areas where mental health nurses are employed
Ballarat Health Services All areas where mental health nurses are employed	Latrobe Regional Health All areas where mental health nurses are employed	Royal Children's Hospital Banksia Unit All areas where mental health nurses are employed
Barwon Health All areas where mental health nurses are employed	Melbourne Health North Western Mental Health All areas where mental health nurses are employed	St Vincent's Hospital All areas where mental health nurses are employed
Eastern Health All areas where mental health nurses are employed	Mercy Public Health All areas where mental health nurses are employed	Inner South Community Mental Health All areas where mental health nurses are employed

8. Workplaces where protected industrial action CANNOT commence from Thursday 19 May 2016:

The following workplaces cannot lawfully commence protected industrial action as less than 50% of the nurses eligible to participate in the protected action ballot returned valid ballots to the Australian Electoral Commission. These workplaces are:

- Alfred Health
- Austin Health
- Bendigo Health
- Monash Health
- Peninsula Health
- Southwest Healthcare
- Forensicare

Remember that our strength is our membership

Most Victorian nurses and midwives are already ANMF members – if you haven't joined yet or you know someone who hasn't, please encourage them to join. Non-members can join online here: <https://members.anmfvic.asn.au/CalculateRate>

If you don't have a Job Rep on your ward, unit or community team, it's time to put up your hand and help your union and your colleagues achieve your claims for 2016. Speak to another ANMF Job Rep or call ANMF Reception on (03) 9275 9333 and a Job Rep Pack will be sent out to you. ANMF will keep you updated via further campaign updates, our website, emails and text messages where appropriate. Please ensure you update your details, including a personal email address, at the Member Portal: <https://members.anmfvic.asn.au>