

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 16 April 2020

No clause left unturned: public sector nurses and midwives finalise EBA

Almost 2000 Victorian public sector nurses and midwives have overwhelmingly voted to accept a proposed offer to settle their 2020-24 enterprise bargaining claims.

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victorian Branch) recommended the proposal at a virtual statewide members meeting held on 16 April.

The 2016 Victorian public sector agreement, covering approximately 50,000 nurses and midwives, expired on 31 March 2020.

Negotiations began in October 2019 between ANMF (Vic Branch), the Victorian Hospitals' Industrial Association and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The 2016 enterprise agreement saw ANMF, VHIA and DHHS agree to an eight-year wages deal. This included historic pay rises up to 26.72 per cent in 2019, elevating Victorian nurses' and midwives' wages to net pay parity with their New South Wales counterparts. Wages rises, agreed in 2016 for the 2020-24 EBA, are three per cent in December 2020, 2021 and 2022.

In the union's 23-year history of enterprise bargaining it is only the second out of seven EBA campaigns that has not involved any industrial action to save safe staffing levels. This is because the Andrews Government enshrined nurse and midwife patient ratios in legislation in 2015.

ANMF members had approximately 170 claims covering definitions; leave; allowances; midwifery governance; predictable hours of work; fatigue and overtime; dispute resolution; recruitment and retention initiatives; education and professional development; maximising permanent employment; occupational health and safety; and gender equity.

ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary Lisa Fitzpatrick said 'Not having to fight to keep safe staffing levels means we were able to continue to have some of the most productive EBA negotiations since our first agreement in 1997.

'Almost every clause in our 170-plus page agreement has been updated, amended or totally overhauled to improve conditions, entitlements and importantly to provide clarification to reduce misinterpretation and disputes,' she said.

'Victorian nurses and midwives maintain net pay parity with their NSW colleagues and have achieved improved allowances and conditions and improved measures to prevent violence and aggression.'

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Improvements in the proposed EBA include:

1. A 9 per cent wage increase over four years – 3 per cent in December 2020, 2021 and 2022.
2. Improved portability of personal leave between public sector employers.
3. From 1 July 2023 the Sunday night shift rate will increase from \$89.90 (currently \$82.30) to \$154.60 as an incentive for full and part-time staff to fill the roster.
4. Improved parental leave from 10 weeks to 14 weeks, qualifying after six months service instead of 12 months.
5. Superannuation payments for all paid and unpaid primary carers leave.
6. Part-time nurses and midwives can access a sixth week of annual leave if they meet a new 'working 10 weekends or part thereof' test.
7. Permanent registered nurses, midwives and enrolled nurses will have a staggered earlier access to their long service leave.
8. Access to study leave expanded to include supporting Victorian Government workforce initiatives and priority areas – for example, an enrolled nurse studying to be a registered nurse and a registered nurse studying to be a midwife. Currently, study leave can only be accessed if it is relevant to a nurse's or midwife's area of clinical practice.
9. Improved payment for defence service leave and voluntary emergency management leave
10. All nursing and midwifery managers will receive education and support to ensure the assessment of occupational health and safety (OHS) risks, OHS incident investigations and OHS consultation with staff all occur.
11. Improved post incident support for nurses and midwives involved in a violent or aggressive incident. Includes a timely investigation, implementing workplace controls to prevent the incident from reoccurring, and providing information regarding nurses' and midwives' rights regarding worker's compensation claims and reporting to police.
12. More detailed occupational violence and aggression (OVA) reporting to the OVA committee including the number of code greys and code blacks and a focus on systemic risk management.
13. Rosters, including on-call rosters, will be posted 28 days in advance instead of 14 days. Currently nurses and midwives receive a \$33.10 allowance if their roster is changed without 7 days' notice. This will increase to \$66.20.
14. Improved emergency on-call and recall entitlements for nurses in cath labs and operating theatres, including anaesthetics and recovery.
15. Introduction of the 8:8:10 roster, which allows for increased handover time between shifts, and reduces fatigue, in five more hospitals: East Wimmera Health Service, Edenhope Health Service, Western District Health Service – Hamilton and Peshurst, and Kerang District Health.
16. A disputes resolution panel to progress new classification and career structure work and resolve disputes about ward amalgamations, and new and existing classifications.
17. A lead apron allowance of \$8 per shift.
18. A senior midwife, above the midwife unit manager level, at Goulburn Valley Health and Latrobe Regional Health to assist with midwifery governance.

ANMF (Vic Branch) Secretary Lisa Fitzpatrick will be available for comment at 3.30pm, Thursday 16 April, outside Scene Change studios unit 3/225 Ingles Street, Port Melbourne.

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