



A•S•U MEDIA RELEASE

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“The Social and Community Services Workers Union”

A win for AIDS Housing Action Group workers at Fair Work Australia

Australian Services Union (ASU) members employed at the AIDS Housing Action Group (AHAG) had their rights to collectively bargain upheld in a Fair Work Australia hearing on Friday, July 9.

Between September 2009, and June 2010, the ASU made a number of formal approaches to the AHAG voluntary Committee of Management on behalf of union members to enter into a collective bargaining process. These approaches were not met with a clear response about whether the organisation intended to bargain or not. On members' request, the ASU pursued a Majority Support Determination at Fair Work Australia, and are pleased to report that the Commissioner confirmed the workers' right to enter into collective bargaining, requiring AHAG to fulfil their obligations.

The ASU is pleased that the Fair Work Act gives workers a provision to pursue their rights around collective bargaining and also to take such situations to an independent umpire and a decision be made.

The ASU anticipates discussions with AHAG to commence within two weeks of the hearing in line with the decision. AHAG is the first community sector agency with whom the ASU has had to go down this path, with the majority of agencies agreeing to a dialogue with the union where approached.

“Members at AHAG really just want the opportunity to put their claims to AHAG in a collective fashion and we are pleased Fair Work Australia has granted the Majority Support Order. Industrial relations is a constantly shifting ballgame, with community sector workers potentially losing conditions through changes to the Award, so many of our members are keen to protect existing conditions through an enforceable agreement,” said ASU Assistant Secretary Lisa Darmanin.

The ASU appreciates that a representative from AHAG attended the hearing and committed to a dialogue around members' claims and looks forward to fruitful negotiations with a fair outcome.

AHAG is a state-wide supported accommodation service for people living with HIV who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. AHAG is based in Collingwood and employs four staff.

-ENDS-

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