



INSIDE: SACS 'Respect' campaign heats up

Employment Services: **not just a job** *project update*



The 'Employment Services: not just a job' project has been progressing well, both nationally and in Victoria. The ASU has had over 500 responses to our employment services survey.

The website www.employmentservicesunion.org.au is getting a respectable number of daily hits. The website is a great resource for employment services workers with information on Fair Work Australia, the Federal government's paid parental leave scheme and the new modern award for the employment sector. The website also has sector updates such as information of government policy relating to employment services. For those seeking work in the employment industry, we have links to relevant sites.

So what is coming up in the Employment sector industrially? By the first of January, 2010, just about every worker in the employment sector will be covered by a new modern award which will provide a safety net for workers in addition to the National Employment Standards.

The minimum wages in this new modern award will be adjusted by Fair Work Australia each year and the whole award reviewed every four years. The award will remain an important safety net for those workers who cannot get an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA).

To improve on the award and lock in industry standard rates of pay and conditions, workers must collectively bargain and be aware of their industrial rights. In short, to get the best possible agreement, workers should be unionised and collectively negotiate.

The ASU will produce a bulletin regarding the conditions contained in the new award and its implications as soon as the modern award has been finalised. This will also be available on www.employmentservicesunion.org.au

More info? If you want to know more about the new modern award for the employment sector and/or other industrial changes, visit our website www.employmentservicesunion.org.au. Hayley Conway (ASU Organiser) is available to talk to you on the phone or to talk to staff at your workplace to provide information on the ever-changing industrial landscape in the employment sector. Hayley's contact details are hconway@asu.asn.au or via phone on 9342 1490.



RESPECT RALLY

10 November 2009

In Your words...

"It was a great turnout and there was a really great feel there, even though it was so hot! All in all it was a great effort by the ASU, and I was proud to be there with everyone in solidarity" **Karen**

"What an amazingly successful event! Well done comrades! Well organised and well attended."

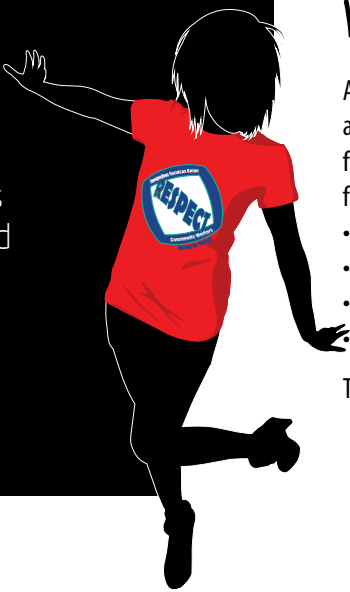
Annie

"Well done...congratulations it's been a great campaign" **Jacqui**

"What a great turn up on the day. You must all be stoked! Just want to let you guys know that our delegate Joe did a great job in rallying the troops and bringing some of the agencies together. Let's power ahead"

Danielle

"Yesterday was sensational and we displayed a real show of strength" **Chris**



MEETING WITH THE VICTORIAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS MINISTER DISAPPOINTING

On November 17, despite the loud noise members made at the rally, at a meeting called to discuss the union's claims, the Minister was unable to report on the Victorian Government's position on funding equal pay! The best they could report was that an "interdepartmental committee" had been set up to examine the issues and impacts in Victoria of a flow-on of the Queensland decision. But no promises of increased funding!

And there were no promises on addressing our concerns regarding the delay in portable long service leave, either. ASU representatives, like members, continue to be frustrated by this lack of action and attention, despite the Commonwealth Government's leadership on this issue. Even the Productivity Commission's draft recommendation that Government should base funding on market wages of relevant skill set required to perform positions, and funding should be indexed to accommodate market wage growth is inconsistent with the State Government's approach!

Winning will only come through a united sector

It is clear we are only going to win this campaign by being strong, united and unionised! The Government responds to pressure of numbers. With more than 20,000 SACS workers in Victoria, 4000 on the steps of Parliament is a great start, but the groundswell needs to build. This will only happen if each of us continues to spread this message to our non-union colleagues.

The message is simple: if you want equal pay, you need to join the union. Enclosed in this newsletter is a union membership form. If every member who receives this newsletter speaks to one colleague about the importance of union membership to strengthen our campaign, we will be twice as strong as we are now. After all, the most common reason people give for not joining their union is: 'No one ever asked me'. So what are you waiting for! Ask a colleague to join the union today!

Update your email address

Increasingly, the ASU is using email to keep members informed of key developments evolving in your sector, whether it's across the board, or a sub-sector like community health, housing, employment services, etc. To ensure you always receive the information, make sure we have your correct details. At the least, we need your current workplace and email addresses (home and work). Update your details online at www.asuvic.asn.au or fax through the contact update form enclosed.

What's next?

At the time of printing, the SACS campaign team, delegates and members are busily debating and planning the next steps in the campaign, through a forum being held on December 10. The forum is set to come up with a plan for stepping up the campaign in 2010, through covering four main themes:

- The ASU pay equity case: what, when and how?
- Bargaining/protecting our rights in the context of Award Modernisation
- Maximising media coverage for future campaign activities
- Continuing to build our strength at the workplace and across the industry

The ASU will report on other planned activities coming out of the member's forum so keep an eye on our website www.asuvic.asn.au



Qld Treasurer says:



"We are providing resources to some of our hardest working, and most important Queenslanders. Community sector workers who care and support some of our most vulnerable Queenslanders, have recently had the value of their work recognised by the independent Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. The single biggest allocation of additional resources in this Budget -some \$414 million across four years - is provided to support the community sector to continue their essential work."

Premier Brumby?



**Victorian
SACS
workers
are still
waiting...**

We must keep up the pressure!

The ASU launched an email campaign to Brumby on November 19, expressing member's anger and disappointment, and calling on him to take immediate action. If you haven't sent an email yet, the ASU urges you and your colleagues to send one today! Go to www.asuvc.asn.au/atlobby.cgi?ID=4 and make your voice heard.

More on our landmark pay equity case....

For many years the ASU has campaigned about the funding, workforce capacity and workforce development issues in the non-government community sector. The union has consistently argued there is a strong relationship between inadequate pay and funding structures and the workforce shortages and capacity constraints in the sector.

At a national level, the ASU has also actively utilised the available industrial mechanisms to improve award rates of pay. The result has been the landmark Equal remuneration case in Queensland in May 2009 which increased our SACS and CASH state award rates by between 18 per cent and 37 per cent.

Industrial Relations Framework

The challenge now has been to work out how to replicate the Queensland Equal remuneration order in the Fair Work Australia system and to flow it on to all SACS workers across Australia.

To that end, the ASU has now finalised an agreement which will mean that instead of having different Awards in each State, the whole of the SACS sector will fall under one single Award made in the Fair Work Australia system. And with the support and co-operation of the Federal Government, this new national SACS Award will be the first Equal Remuneration test case in the new Federal system.

What this means?

The Agreement does not mean that the Queensland rates are automatically replicated in the Fair Work Australia system – the ASU and others will still have to run a case before the Fair Work Australia Tribunal. On the upside, everyone involved recognises that if the Queensland case is anything to go by, there will be an outcome and that our governments will have to fund what results from the case and the Federal Government has agreed to co-ordinate discussions with the states about any funding implications.



Gillard speaking at this year's ASU State Conference

This is groundbreaking! Even acting PM Julia Gillard was excited about the prospect of the federal pay equity case to be brought by the ASU to Fair Work Australia (FWA) next year, saying "however it goes, it will be a history-making case". Gillard continued to say, "I think it's going to be pretty exciting to see."

We want to commence the case in early 2010, so much needs to be done and organised. We are now briefing our stakeholders with more detail to maximise understanding, input and support. Here in Victoria, we need to be mindful that the Brumby government - despite two years of active campaigning by union members - has not made any move whatsoever to look at improving funding arrangements for the sector and there is no guarantee that they will do so, even if the results of the case mean your wages must go up. That means we have to work harder than ever to keep the pressure up! That means getting involved and getting active!

Community Health Centres vote to take industrial action

Industrial action ballots have now been finalised at a number of Community Health Centres. Members at Darebin CH, Dianella CH, Merri CH, Isis Primary Care, EACH and Inner South CH have all voted to take industrial action, ranging from imposing bans on various activities all the way to holding stop-work meetings.

Ballots are still continuing as we go to press. Members at Bendigo CH, Bentleigh Bayside CH, Dousta Galla CH, Goulburn Valley CH, Grampians CH, Isis CH, Merri CH, Ranges CH and Western Region Health are all at different stages of the secret ballot process.

And ASU organisers are out on the road at a number of other centres, answering questions and working with members so they can make decisions about what they want to do about the current stalemate in negotiations for a new Agreement.

So what happens next?

Members at each centre will decide how and when to impose bans/action at their workplace. Of course, in some cases, we may get better 'bang for our buck' by all taking action together! Members have decided to have a "Fax the Minister" campaign. Every Wednesday, starting on December 2, members are faxing Health Minister Andrews. The ASU again wrote to Mr Andrews recently, telling him that industrial action was imminent and asking to meet with him at a convenient time to try and sort things out before it was too late. **His response?**

*Dear Lisa,
Unfortunately, due to diary commitments, Minister Andrews is unable to meet with Brian Parkinson and ASU members at this time.
Please accept the Minister's apologies.
Kind regards*

In addition to faxes, members can email the minister a template letter – go to www.asuvic.asn.au to send one today!

Finally, on Wednesday, December 16, workers at those CHC's where industrial action has been approved in a secret ballot conducted by the AEC will stop work for four hours. We will rally outside the offices of the Minister of Health at 10am to deliver our message in person: **"Mr Andrews, we need to talk!!"**

So if you work at a CHC where the secret ballot application has not yet been approved, contact your ASU organiser to talk about how you can support this rally. Keep checking our website for updates about this – www.asuvic.asn.au

Australian Services Union Annual Award for Women



The ASU Annual Award for women honors ASU members who make or have made outstanding efforts to promote women's participation in the ASU.

The criteria for the Award incorporates characteristics such as:

- i An active branch member;
- ii Outstanding service as a Delegate, EEO Delegate, OH&S Delegate;
- iii Women's Committee member and/or other member to promote and encourage women's participation in the ASU;
- iv Nominated by the Women's Committee.

The Award was first presented in 1995 and has been awarded annually since that time.

The Award is presented each year at ASU Women's Conference. If you know an outstanding candidate for this award at your workplace then please nominate them!

Nominations should be sent to Maria Kaplanis via email mkaplanis@asuvic.com by close of business on February 12, 2010. Please include a brief description about why you are nominating the person, in line with the above criteria if possible.



On behalf of the team, I would like to wish all members a happy and safe festive season. It has been a pleasure to work with all of you throughout 2009, and I look forward to a challenging 2010 filled with good news, lots of wins, and wage justice for the important work that all of our members deserve!

*Lisa Darmanin
Assistant Branch Secretary*

Award modernisation for SACS workers

The Full Bench of the AIRC released its decision on the final form of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 on 4 December 2009. A summary of the key issues of concern to ASU members is as follows:

- A salary packaging clause has been included
- Implementation of new wages and classifications has been deferred until 1 July 2011
- Penalty rates and loadings transition will occur from 1 July 2010
- Personal/carers leave will be 10 days per annum

Further detailed information will be provided to members via the forum on 10 December and updates will be available for members via www.asuvic.asn.au for a full copy of the Award go to www.airc.gov.au/awardmod/awards/social.pdf