

DENTAL OFFICERS' 2018 ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT PROPOSALS FOR FEEDBACK

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the terms of a proposal for a new enterprise agreement to replace the Northern Territory Public Sector Dental Officers' 2014—2018 Enterprise Agreement that expired on 21 August 2018.

This proposal takes into account the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and bargaining representative's claims that were initially provided on 25 June 2018, with revised claims being put on 2 July 2018; the issues arising during the negotiation meetings; the Northern Territory Government's fiscal position and wages policy; and the prevailing economic conditions.

The terms of this proposed offer comprise a total and interlinked package of improvements and changes to terms and conditions of employment. The salary offer is dependent on the achievement of the proposed efficiencies.

Term of Agreement

It is proposed the new Agreement would have a four year term with an expiration date 12 months after the final salary increase paid under the agreement. This would provide employees and the Department of Health TEHS and CAHS with certainty and secured terms and conditions over this period.

Salaries and Allowances

Salary Increases

Subject to the achievement of proposed changes contained in this offer and certification of the Agreement by the Fair Work Commission:

- an initial salary increase of 2.5 per cent to be paid effective from 21 August 2018;
- a second salary increase of 2.5 per cent to be paid effective from the first full pay period from 21 August 2019;
- a third salary increase of 2.5 per cent to be paid effective from the first full pay period from 21 August 2020; and
- a fourth salary increase of 2.5 per cent to be paid effective from the first full pay period from 21 August 2021.

Salary increases under the new agreement would not apply to employees who cease employment with the NTPS prior to the commencement date of the Agreement, which would be seven days after it is approved by the Fair Work Commission.

The proposed salary increases are set out in the following table.

Dental Officers 2018 Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

Without Prejudice—For Discussion Only

Tabled: 27 August 2018

Dental Officer Designation	Current Salary	Salary effective from 21 August 2018	Salary effective on the first full pay period on or after 21 August 2019	Salary effective on the first full pay period on or after 21 August 2021	Salary effective on the first full pay period on or after 21 August 2022
Dentist 1	100,552	103,066	105,642	108,284	110,991
Dentist 2	105,255	107,886	110,584	113,348	116,182
Dentist 3	110,179	112,933	115,757	118,651	121,617
Senior Dentist 1	121,854	124,900	128,023	131,223	134,504
Senior Dentist 2	130,574	133,838	137,184	140,614	144,129
Senior Dentist 3	139,295	142,777	146,347	150,005	153,756
Dentist Manager	141,128	144,656	148,273	151,979	155,779
Remote Dentist Manager	143,475	147,062	150,738	154,507	158,370
Remote Service Manager	145,766	149,410	153,145	156,974	160,898
Senior Dentist Manager	146,966	150,640	154,406	158,266	162,223
Clinical Manager	160,013	164,013	168,114	172,316	176,624
Principal Dental Adviser	173,061	177,388	181,822	186,368	191,027

Retention and Remote Service Allowance

The retention and remote service allowance would also have a one-off increase of 2.5% in line with the general salary increases, which means that the amounts would be \$10,250 for dental officers residing and working in Darwin, the greater Darwin region, or Alice Springs after each year of continuous service; and \$14, 350 for dental officers residing and working outside the greater Darwin or Alice Springs regions after each year of continuous service.

Allowance in Lieu of Private Practice

In line with the salary increases the allowance in lieu of private practice would be increased on an annual basis in line with the following table.

Classification	Current Rates	Rates effective 6.1.2019	Rates effective 6.1.2020	Rates effective 6 January 2021	Rates effective 6.1.2022
Senior Dentist	13,048	13,374	13,709	14,051	14,403
Dentist Manager	19,572	20,061	20,563	21,077	21,604
Remote Dentist Manager	19,572	20,061	20,563	21,077	21,604
Remote Service Manager	26,095	26,747	27,416	28,101	28,804
Senior Dentist Manager	26,095	26,747	27,416	28,101	28,804
Clinical Manager	32,619	33,434	34,270	35,127	36,005
Principal Dental Adviser	32,619	33,434	34,270	35,127	36,005

Professional Development Reimbursement Payment

During the negotiations, the CPSU and bargaining representatives set out the difficulties that dental officers experience when they are required to pay significant fees for professional development activities. In the light of these discussions, the proposal would include the proposition that would enable dental officers to submit their reimbursement claims on a quarterly basis; however, the existing qualifying periods and conditions would remain. These include the requirement to:

- complete 12 months continuous service;
- continuing to be employed after each 12 month qualifying period; and
- proof of payment and undertaking of the professional development activities.

The professional development reimbursement payment would be increased on an annual basis in accordance with the quantum of the salary increases in the agreement.

Northern Territory Allowance

The Northern Territory Allowance (NTA) would be retained for existing employees currently receiving the allowance. It is proposed that NTA be grand parented to existing employees receiving the allowance.

For employees currently receiving the \$960 this rate would remain unchanged.

For employees who commenced on or prior to 31 July 1987 who receive a variable rate (depending on their designation and increment), it is proposed that the rate is standardised at the top increment rate for each classification.

Other Conditions and Entitlements covered in Determinations

The proposed offer would also include the continuation of the following conditions and entitlements that are provided in Commissioner's determinations made under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*. These are:

- Relocation allowance for Katherine and Alice Springs;
- Rental concession for remote localities categories 1 and 2;
- Satellite TV or internet service reimbursement; and
- Higher education loan.

Commitment to Review

The CPSU and bargaining representative raised some important matters that require ongoing work. It is proposed that these would be best managed through a review during the life of the agreement. These are set out below.

Dental Officer Classification Structure (including level descriptors)

It is apparent that there are elements of the current dental officer classification structure that are no longer fit for purpose and that work needs to be done to ensure that the structure better serves the Department of Health, Top End Health Services (TEHS), Central Australian Health Services (CAHS) and dental officers in the delivery of effective, clinical services to Territorians.

Development of a new or revised classification structure would require considerable work and input from TEHS and CAHS, dental officers and the CPSU. Consequently, this issue would be included in the proposed review.

Dental Officer Competency Framework

Further there is a requirement to develop a competency framework for dental officers that complements the classification structure. It is also important that such a competency framework is consistent with standards set by the Australian Dental Council.

Consequently, the proposal would also include a review of and development of a competency framework for dental officers.

Advanced Clinical Practice

Another matter that arose through the claims and ensuing discussions was the question of recognition of dental officers who demonstrate advanced clinical practice. It is agreed that this is a matter of merit, but that the development of a proposal for advanced clinical practice including criteria for awarding the status of advanced clinical practitioner and the guidelines for application and maintenance of such status would also require considerable work. This matter would also be included in the review.

Sabbatical Leave

The question of sabbatical leave also arose in the negotiations, specifically the claim to lower the threshold for accessing sabbatical leave from SD3 to SD1. Again, use of sabbatical leave and whether it continues to deliver benefits to the department and dental officers generally would also merit inclusion in the review.

The proposal also includes the following key improvements.

Leave-related Matters

Expanded Parental Leave for Partners

Expanding the parental leave provisions in order to provide partners with access to primary carers leave, when applicable. I propose that, depending on the employees' length of service, this leave would be up to 18 weeks from the birth (or placement) of the child. It would provide partners with additional leave when they take on the primary carer responsibilities.

Where a family unit has a new child it is proposed that parental leave would be available for partners who are NTPS employees and who subsequently become primary caregivers. This leave would be available where the initial primary caregiver returns to work and the partner who then becomes the primary caregiver would then be able to access paid leave as primary caregiver leave. For employees with more than five years of service this would be up to 18 weeks from the birth of the child, and 14 weeks for employees with one to five years of service.

Partners may still access partner leave (up to 2 weeks paid) prior to accessing this new partner as primary caregiver leave. However, only one parent of the family unit can nominate as the primary caregiver at a time. The maximum period of paid leave for a partner would be 18 weeks which could be made up of partner leave and primary caregiver leave subject to your length of employment.

It is also proposed to broaden the application of paid parental leave provisions to include surrogacy situations and to expand the leave available to partners. This would provide employees who meet the relevant criteria with the current generous levels of paid parental leave of up to 18 weeks, and up to a total of three years off for parental leave purposes.

Employees would continue to be able to request leave without pay or flexible working arrangements up until the child reaches school age.

Employer Funded Superannuation whilst on unpaid parental leave

In addition to the broadened parental leave provisions, it is proposed the employer funded superannuation payments during periods of unpaid parental leave be extended from six months to 12 months. This would ensure the payment of employer funded superannuation payments for 12 months from the date of commencing parental leave ensuring employees proceeding on maternity leave have no loss of superannuation earnings for 12 months.

Domestic and Family Violence

The NTPS provides access to uncapped paid leave for employees experiencing domestic and family violence through miscellaneous leave provisions. To improve awareness of these existing provisions it is proposed to include a clause in the new agreement highlighting the commitment to providing leave and other support to employees who are experiencing domestic and family violence.

Cultural and Ceremonial Leave (unpaid)

Providing up to five days unpaid cultural and ceremonial leave each year to employees in addition to the six weeks paid recreation leave. This proposal takes into consideration the Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy, where we continue to grow our Aboriginal workforce in the NTPS so it is more reflective of the community we serve.

Other Matters

Change Management Clause

The change management clause to be amended to provide clarity with regard to consultation on major change would occur prior to a CEO making a final decision. This would further clarify that employees' views are taken into account prior to decision on major change in the workplace.

Staff Performance, Training and Development

The inclusion of provisions which set out the key principles for employee planning and development. This would ensure the employee performance management and development systems that the department has in place under Employment Instruction 4 are also referenced in the enterprise agreement.

Recognition of kinship relationships and cultural obligations

Through the Public Sector Consultative Council, the Commissioner for Public Employment and NTPS-affiliated trade unions are endeavouring to support Aboriginal employees, by identifying productive ways that the kinship obligations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees can be recognised. It is proposed that this work continues in settlement of this element in the CPSU and bargaining representative's claim.

Union rights and dispute settling procedures

The rights and obligations of union delegates would be set out in the Agreement and would be underpinned by a set of key principles. There would also be additional protections in relation to the dispute settling procedures to maintain current provisions while a dispute is being resolved. Also any disputes about the application of By-laws can be resolved through the dispute settling procedures and may be conciliated (but not arbitrated) by the Fair Work Commission.

An employee would continue to have access to the grievance review mechanisms under the Public Sector Employment and Management Act if a By-law has not been correctly applied.