

# Aboriginal Health Practitioners Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

## INFORMATION SHEET 1

### Proposals for a New Enterprise Agreement

There have been extensive discussions between bargaining representatives since bargaining commenced in April 2018. The parties have invested considerable time and effort exploring the log of claims presented by United Voice. Representatives from this Office, Department of Health and United Voice recently discussed proposals for a new agreement.

Whilst the parties have not agreed on all matters, the following proposals reflect key improvements for Aboriginal Health Practitioners that respond to union claims and reflect Northern Territory Public Sector common conditions.

#### Four year term with 2.5% annual wage increases

- A four year agreement will provide certainty and stability for employees.
- 2.5% annual wage increases ensure conditions are maintained at a competitive level.
- The first 2.5% increase to be effective from 9 August 2018.

#### Maintain key terms and conditions

- Key terms and conditions to be maintained, including:
  - Leave and Allowances
  - Employment Security
  - Redeployment and Redundancy

#### Improved Aboriginal Health Practitioner provisions

The following improvements which address UV claims, and have been discussed during bargaining, include:

**NEW and improved classification structure** for Aboriginal Health Practitioners. A new career structure will be introduced to provide leadership and management roles and assess the current levels to enhance career pathways for Aboriginal Health Practitioners. The revised classification structure is being finalised by an independent expert, Mercer and will be finalised in consultation with United Voice and AHPs. It is proposed that, if in-principle agreement is reached on bargaining matters for a new agreement, a staff ballot will be conducted when the revised structure is finalised.

The parties commit to continuing work after the revised classification structure is introduced to:

- Finalise a relevant career structure for AHPs introducing leadership and management roles
- Develop a transition plan for how existing AHPs move to the new classification structure
- Investigate an Exemplary Practice Scheme
- Explore the introduction of a trainee and graduate program following the development of a trainee framework
- Pay Progression Scheme for Senior AHPs (same as the Senior Administrative and Senior Professional roles)

**Review language and interpretation skills:** In bargaining the parties acknowledge the varied level of language, knowledge and skills across the workforce. The parties need to assess the current duties expected in the AHP roles and explore outside of the enterprise agreement, what may be required to build confidence in interpreting and upskilling AHPs through training or relevant courses that are available.

**NAIDOC Day:** under Cultural and Ceremonial Leave the importance of NAIDOC day will be recognised. Aboriginal Health Practitioners who wish to partake in activities associated with NAIDOC Day may require more time off than just their lunch break. Requests to work additional hours to enable sufficient time off in lieu or flexitime credits to be accrued to cover this period should be reasonably considered and supported. A separate clause will be inserted into the new agreement to provide clear guidelines on the availability of and accessing, flexible work arrangements.

**NEW Professional Development Allowance:** The introduction of a Professional Development Allowance to assist with Aboriginal Health Practitioner's professional development. This allowance could be used to assist employees attend conferences, seminars, registration fees etc. The criteria would be as follows. If an employee has:

- 1 – 3 years continuous service as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner – up to \$300 per annum; or
- 3 years or more continuous service as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner – up to \$500 per annum

Key Benefits of this scheme are:

- The allowance is payable for the professional development activities such as fees for professional courses, tuition, conferences, fees for professional bodies where eligibility for membership is essential for professional registration, subscription to technical/business publications and the purchase of technical books.
- As part of the performance planning and review process, an employee and their manager may agree to forward plan a professional development activity that may incorporate more than one year's allowance.
- An advance payment may be considered at the employee's request where the employee is required to meet substantial costs in advance for an approved professional development activity.

This allowance will be adjusted annually in accordance with the annual wage increase. It is also anticipated over the period of the enterprise agreement this allowance will be reviewed to ascertain the uptake rate and if the rate set is reasonable.

**NEW AHP Joint Consultative Committee:** The parties agree to establish a consultative committee made up of union and departmental representatives to consider departmental wide issues affecting the AHP profession.

- Many of the matters raised by the union that are operational matters will be addressed through the establishment of a new Joint Consultative Committee to discuss and monitor operational issues relating to Aboriginal Health Practitioner profession on an ongoing basis during the life of the agreement. A number of issues were investigated and clarified during bargaining meetings in relation to:
  - Consistency in the application of uniforms across work units
  - Access to flexible work arrangements
  - Application of higher duties
  - Access to training and development through performance planning

## **Improved ‘NTPS Common’ provisions to be included**

The following improved ‘NTPS Common Conditions’ which also cover UV claims, have been discussed during bargaining and include:

- **Parental leave provisions (surrogacy)** - Extend current parental leave entitlements to include surrogacy based circumstances.
- **Parental leave provisions (partner leave)** - Extend current parental leave entitlements to include paid partner leave (up to 14 or 18 weeks depending on years of service) where the employee is the primary caregiver from birth/placement of child or becomes the primary caregiver in certain circumstances following birth/placement.
- **Parental leave provisions (superannuation)** - Increase the period that employer funded superannuation can be paid while on unpaid parental leave, from six months to 12 months.
- **Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) Leave** – New provisions will enhance awareness of the existing uncapped miscellaneous (paid) leave provided through the By-law provisions for all NTPS employees.
- **Cultural and Ceremonial leave** – New leave provisions allowing employees access to up to 5 days unpaid leave per annum to meet cultural or ceremonial obligations. This clause is consistent across the NTPS with further wording added to the AHPs EA recognising the important role Aboriginal Health Practitioners play in the community.

## **NT Allowance**

It is proposed that Northern Territory Allowance (NTA) be grand parented to existing employees in receipt of the allowance immediately before commencement of the new agreement to bring these provisions in line with the general NTPS.

## **Consideration of Proposals**

The above proposals and the continuation of existing employment conditions represent a fair package that improves wages for employees, and introduces very modest efficiencies to support a range of improved conditions.

Feedback on the above proposals is sought by 21 September 2018. It is important that employees get to vote on a new Enterprise Agreement to allow salary increases and new terms and conditions of employment to commence in a timely manner.