

RFDS MEMBERS DESERVE A FAIR AND IMPROVED AGREEMENT

On 25 November 2020, the Victorian Ambulance Union Incorporated (**VAU**) attended another bargaining meeting with Royal Flying Doctor Services (**RFDS**). This meeting was organised by RFDS in response to members taking protected Industrial Action and voting NO to their previous proposal.

At this bargaining meeting, RFDS proposed minor improvements to the proposed agreement. Specifically, they made minor changes to their proposed two-tier pay system and offered to make it easier for full-time employees to qualify for an extra week of leave. Given these changes, the VAU held a members meetings on 30 November 2020 to discuss the same. In this meeting, members categorically rejected RFDS's new proposal.

On 2 December 2020 the VAU formally rejected RFDS's current proposal and instead put forward our own proposed agreement. You can look at our proposed agreement by following this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/18dYJFW_L58Q9HTBEwxTgfc9PQhsmWwPX/view?usp=sharing

VAU/ANMF proposed agreement

The VAU/ANMF proposed agreement is simply seeking retain current conditions by ensuring that this agreement provides better conditions than the *Ambulance and Patient Transport Industry Award 2020*, as well as give employees fair pay increases. It is in stark contrast to RFDS's proposal, which cuts back conditions.

Considering RFDS's offer, the areas of major dispute with RFDS remain the following:

1. The incorporation of the Ambulance and Patient Transport Industry Award 2020 into the Agreement;
2. Pay increases;
3. The two-tiered pay system; and
4. Rosters.

Issue 1: The incorporation of the Ambulance and Patient Transport Industry Award 2020 into the Agreement

RFDS do not want to include the *Ambulance and Patient Transport Industry Award 2020* into an agreement by way of "incorporation" as your existing agreement currently does. In our view, it is essential that this is incorporated in the proposed Agreement. It provides the minimum standard under which Non-Emergency Patient Transport (**NEPT**) workers receive their entitlements. From time to time the Fair Work Commission (**FWC**) updates the *Ambulance and Patient Transport Industry Award 2020* and because the Award is incorporated into your agreement, the benefits flow onto you. It is therefore vital to keep the inclusion of the Award in your Agreement, so these updates are automatically applied to you within the life of your enterprise agreement. For example, on 20 November 2020 the Award changed to make clear that casuals have to be paid overtime on a daily basis and if working more than 38 hours over week. As the *Ambulance and Patient Transport Industry Award 2020* is currently incorporated by reference in your existing agreement, casuals now have to be paid overtime both on a daily and weekly basis.

There is also a number of entitlements in the *Ambulance and Patient Transport Industry Award 2020* that are not referred to in your current agreement. For example, if you are currently rostered off on a public holiday, you should receive an additional day and half of pay or extra leave. If RFDS's proposal was accepted (which removes incorporation of the Award from the Agreement), you would no longer be entitled to receive this.

Issue 2: 2% or CPI wage increases

Employees should be entitled to receive increases of 2% or CPI (whichever is greater) from 1 July in each year of the Agreement. RFDS only wish to offer CPI increases. This is concerning, given the impacts of COVID-19 on the economy. CPI may be in the negative, meaning that members may receive no pay increase or minimal increases during the life the Agreement.

Issue 3: The two-tier pay system

At first glance the changes made by RFDS in their latest proposal may seem like there is no two-tier pay system and that they have done away with it. However, this is not true.

RFDS's recent proposal only includes an ATA1 classification for new employees. This means that all new employees will be classified as ATA1 and no future employees will be employed as ATA2 or ATA3. If this was implemented, it would mean that there will be no room for career progression for NEPT workers who gain extra qualifications.

Issue 4: Rosters

The VAU has received a large amount of feedback from members about rosters at RFDS, specifically their fatiguing nature, poor turn arounds from night shifts and their constant changing starting times.

To address this issue, we have proposed that employees should have 48 hours off duty if an employee has worked 8 consecutive day shifts and 72 hours off duty if an employee has worked 4 consecutive night shifts. RFDS has rejected this proposal because they want flexibility.

What next?

It is vital that both members and non-members understand the importance of continuing to negotiate to have these major issues addressed.

We will be notifying the taking of new Protected Industrial Actions shortly and urge you to vote **NO** if RFDS ask you to vote on their revised proposed agreement.

You deserve a fair Agreement that protects your current conditions, not an agreement that strips back your current conditions.

Please contact your NEPT Organisers for any questions and feedback

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In Solidarity,



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