WAGE JUSTICE FOR NURSES: BETTER, SAFER CARE FOR PATIENTS

The Andrews Labor Government has reached a fair, just and responsible in-principle agreement with the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) to resolve the enterprise agreement and deliver better, safer care for Victorian patients.

This is the first time in decades that a Nurses EBA has been negotiated without significant industrial action. This is because we understand that when you respect nurses and midwives – you get better outcomes for patients.

The historic eight year agreement delivers wage justice for Victoria’s 40,000 nurses, bringing them into line with their New South Wales counterparts.

For too long, Victorian nurses have sacrificed wage increases in order to preserve nurse-to-patient ratios and protect patient safety. As a result, Victorian nurses wages fell behind their interstate counterparts.

Last year, the Labor Government enshrined those ratios in legislation so our hardworking nurses and midwives would no longer have to bargain over a fundamental issue of patient safety.

This agreement rectifies that history and delivers wage justice to our hardworking nurses and midwives.

The agreement is fair, affordable and responsible, delivering annualised base increases of 2.5 per cent a year in line with the Government’s fair pay guide, as well as additional increases linked to service delivery improvements. The agreement has a gross annualised cost of 3.4 per cent over the life of the agreement.

This agreement secures important service delivery improvements include:

- Improved patient treatment times
- Better patient safety
- Increased nurse vaccination rates to reduce rates of infection
- Improved occupational health and safety outcomes
- Improved sustainability in our health services, to reduce cost and waste

It also provides for productivity improvements including changes to nurses sick leave entitlements, casual long service leave, as well as aged care reform to deliver a modern staffing structure that recognises and protects the roles of existing staff.

Importantly, the ANMF and the Government have worked together to deliver extra nursing hours in some rural and regional settings, which will improve the quality and safety of patient care by allowing more time for nurses to ensure continuity of care at shift changeover.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jill Hennessy

“This agreement will provide our hardworking nurses and midwives the wages and support they need to do their job caring for patients and saving lives.”

“We’re delivering our nurses and midwives the wage justice they deserve and putting patient safety first.”
“This is the first EBA in decades that hasn’t resulted in significant industrial action. I’d like to commend the ANMF for their leadership throughout the negotiations that made this outcome possible.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Natalie Hutchins

“The Andrews Labor Government and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation have bargained in good faith to get the best outcome for nurses, midwives and Victorians.”

“Today’s in-principle agreement delivers certainty for our hardworking nurses, midwives and all Victorians who benefit each and every day from the quality care they provide.”