



COMMUNITY MATTERS

ASU Leads the Way Towards an Exciting 2010 for the Community Sector

Campaigning to Date

For the past three years we have been campaigning collaboratively in South Australia with the Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Union, the Association of Major Community Organisations, the South Australian Council of Social Service and numerous employers and peak bodies as the *Strong Community Healthy State* campaign group to build a strong community sector able to continue to provide high quality services to vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians. In the Territory we have also been working alongside other Unions and the Northern Territory Council of Social Service towards the same goal.

Along the way we have had some campaign success with the South Australian Government agreeing to provide 4% additional funding on some State Government funded programmes to be directed specifically to wages over four years and guaranteed 3% indexation also on some State Government funded programmes; this win represented important public recognition of the need to address urgent workforce development issues threatening the sector and also represented a good start! In the Territory and in South Australia we have also had agreement from State and Territory Governments respectively to set up community sector workforce taskforces to look at a range of issues including access to conditions, redundancy and training. In South Australia we received funding from the State Government through its Health and Safety Workplace Partnership Programme to undertake our *Safe Workplaces, Healthy Community – Building Community Sector Health and Safety Project* (more on this page 2).

The Queensland Pay Equity Case

Your ASU has also been campaigning in other states and territories towards a stronger community sector. The Queensland ASU together with the Queensland Council of Social Service, employers and other stakeholders ran a pay equity case on the *Queensland Social and Community Services Award*. In a landmark decision, in May 2009, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission awarded wage increases of between 18 to 37% to Queensland community services workers. A pay equity decision found that the work of the non government community services sector is undervalued in relation to public sector work and due to the fact that the sector is dominated by women workers. Through long term campaigning by the whole Queensland community services sector, the Queensland government agreed to substantially fund the decision. (For more information on the Queensland Award rates and comparisons with SA Award rates, visit <http://tinyurl.com/asu-pay-equity>.)



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The Referral of Community Sector Workers to the Federal Industrial Relations System and the ASU's Historic Heads of Agreement with the Federal Government—Paying the Way for Community Sector Pay Equity

Given the significance of the Queensland decision and your ASU's desire to run a federal pay equity case for all community sector workers to ensure workforce issues like low pay and attraction and retention are addressed so that the sector can continue to provide high quality services to vulnerable people, during 2009 your ASU negotiated with the Deputy Prime Minister about the possible referral of all community sector workers in Australia to the new Federal industrial relations system. With support from various State Governments, your ASU negotiated an historic agreement with the Federal Government which paves the way for pay equity for the community sector around Australia (copies of this agreement are in the latest edition of the ASU's *Care Professional Journal* which can be accessed at

<http://preview.tinyurl.com/Care-Professional-Nov09>

The historic agreement -

- recognises the national implications of the Queensland decision;
- commits the ASU to supporting the referral of community services to the federal industrial relations system;
- provides protection of the Queensland decision for Queensland workers;
- provides for the Commonwealth to support the use of the Queensland Equal Remuneration principles in the Federal Pay Equity Case;
- provides for the Commonwealth and the ASU to agree on an agreed set of facts for the case;
- acknowledges the need for the Commonwealth to fund the decision and commits them to fund it; and
- in light of an impending federal pay equity case, suspends aspects of Award Modernisation (see below).

The agreement means that the very first national equal remuneration case under the new *Fair Work Act* will be run by your ASU with the support and co-operation of the Australian Government.

The landmark agreement will provide an unprecedented opportunity for us to argue for significant pay increases based on pay equity principles to flow to social and community sector workers throughout the country. The community sector is a key part of the Australian economy and is at the forefront of delivering social inclusion to our country; we very much look forward to working together towards pay equity in 2010!

A Changing Industrial Relations Environment/Award Modernisation

All of this has been achieved in a changing industrial relations environment.

The previous Federal Howard Government started a process through its *Work Choices* legislation of 'modernising' Awards. The new Federal Rudd Government has rid Australia of the worst aspects of *Work Choices* by ensuring the restoration of a new safety net for all Australian workers, access for most Australian workers to unfair dismissal provisions, removing many of the limitations on what can be collectively bargained for and making bargaining fairer and setting up *Fair Work Australia* as the independent umpire. Award modernisation has however continued and as a result 47

community sector Awards across Australia have now been modernised into the *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SCHCDS Award)*. This means that from 1 January 2010 if you were on the Social and Community Services Award, Disability Services Award, Crisis Assistance, Supported Housing Award or the corresponding Notional Agreement Preserving a State Award (NAPSA) you will now be covered by this Award. If you were on the Community Employment, Training and Support Services Award you will now be covered by the *Labour Market Assistance Industry Award 2010*.

We have lobbied hard to ensure the new SCHCDS Award retains as many conditions as possible. Due to our impending national pay equity case we have successfully lobbied to retain existing wages until the outcome of the pay equity case is determined. Key dates for the implementation of the modern SCHCDS Award are therefore as follows:

1 January 2010

For those employed in constitutional corporations, conditions in the new Award (other than any wage related matters – ie, wages, penalties and loadings) take effect

1 July 2010

For those employed in constitutional corporations, wage related matters in the new Award will take effect (ie, penalties and loadings but not wage rates)

1 January 2011

For those employed in non-constitutional corporations the new Award (except for wages) will take effect

1 July 2011

Wages in the new Award will take effect

Some crucial things to note:

- **Your existing Award rates will be maintained until 1 July 2011;** this decision has been made to take into account the fact that your ASU will be running the national pay equity case and intends to have improved rates in the new Award through this case by this time. We will of course argue that a CPI increase should apply during 2010.
- We intend to work with you at a workplace level to negotiate the preservation of existing conditions where conditions in the new Award are worse than those you have had to date; some collective agreements also provide for the best conditions to be preserved.
- It will be up to your organisation to determine whether or not it is a constitutional corporation.
- If you are currently on an Enterprise Award – ie, the SCOSA, CARA or Barkuma Award, you will remain on this Award for now until it is transitioned to the new modern Award. It is, however your ASU's intention to work with you to ensure that the benefits of the pay equity case are applied to you.
- Where there is a decrease or improvement in an allowance or loading, the decrease/improvement will be transitioned in over a number of years.

Your ASU has developed a comprehensive comparison of your existing Awards and the new modern Award; please contact your ASU Organiser or call the office for a copy. Comprehensive information will also be provided at upcoming forums (see page 3).

There is no doubt that during 2010 we have before us the best opportunity we have had to significantly address low wages, attraction and retention in the community sector. I look forward to working alongside each and every ASU member and all sector stakeholders to address the workforce issues facing the community sector and to build a truly socially inclusive Australia.

**Katrine Hildyard
Branch Secretary**



Upcoming Events, Activities and Things you Can Participate In

Week beginning 1 February

Darwin Forums for the Whole Community Sector and Meetings in Workplaces (venues and times to be advised)

10 February

SA Community Services Members Meeting – Understanding Award Modernisation and the Pay Equity Case, Planning the Year Ahead – 5.30pm, ASU Office (see page 4)

26 February

ASU Workplace Reps and Active Members Conference
9.30 am to 4.30 pm on Friday 26 February 2010
Woodville West Torrens Football Club, Oval Avenue, Woodville South

2 March

SA Forum for Whole Community Sector – Lobbying for Pay Equity – 1.00pm to 5.00pm, ASU Office (see page 4)

March

Delegations to State Members of Parliament, Invitations to Parliamentarians to visit Community Sector Workplaces in lead up to 20 March SA election

5 March

Pay Equity Themed International Women's Day March in Adelaide – 5.30pm, departure point to be advised

April

National ASU Members in Community Sector Meeting – date and venue to be advised

May

National Day of Action for Pay Equity – details to be advised

Ongoing

Your ASU has a petition circulating which calls on State, Territory and Federal Governments to commit to funding the outcomes of the pay equity case; if you do not have copies in your workplace, please contact your ASU Organiser/office

Employment Services: not just a job



Employment Services: not just a job is an Employment Service Worker Reconnection project which is being undertaken by your ASU with funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). This project is investigating issues relating to the migration of workers from Job Network providers to Job Services Australia (JSA) providers and the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce for JSA.

In SA, funding has been used to employ Jason Newell on a part-time basis as Project Officer until March 2010. The *Employment Services: not just a job* Project has had great success in 2009 with support from Job Services Australia providers in SA and 20% of the national online survey being completed by SA/NT providers. Thanks to all who supported and participated in the survey. During December an SA focus group met and provided insight into how organisations and its employees were impacted by the transition. Data and information is being collated towards a national report for DEEWR.

Julie Kun is the National Co-ordinator of the *Employment Services: not just a job* Project and the ASU representative on the National Industry Reference Group for the employment services sector.

ASU visits to employment services workplaces in 2010 will provide more information on the changes occurring in the employment services industry and in industrial relations generally; you can visit our website www.employmentservicesunion.org.au to find out more or contact JSA Project officer Jason Newell (pictured above) on (08) 8363 1322 or at jnewell@asu-sant.asn.au to organise a visit to your workplace.

Safe Workplaces, Healthy Community - Building Community Sector Health and Safety Project Initiatives



A joint ASU/LHMU conference **A Community of Interest Approach to Health and Safety in the Workplace** will be held on **19 February 2010**. The agenda will cover a range of occupational health, safety and welfare issues in the community sector.

The event will be opened by the Minister for Industrial Relations the Hon Paul Caica MP who will also launch our new Handbook for community sector Health and Safety Representatives.

The conference is major event contributing to two projects funded through SafeWork SA's *Health and Safety Workplace Partnership Programme*. The ASU is undertaking the *Safe Workplaces, Healthy Community - Building Community Sector Health and Safety* project with a major focus on improving arrangements to enhance occupational health, safety and welfare in community sector workplaces, particularly by building more effective participatory structures. A Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Workers Union project focuses on the community services and manufacturing industry sectors to increase engagement at the worksite level with occupational health, safety and welfare. The conference also supports the workforce development objectives of the *Strong Community Healthy State* campaign.

You can download the flyer to forward electronically to your workmates at

<http://tinyurl.com/Workplace-Safety-Conference>

You are invited to register by **Friday 22 January** to secure a place.

To register, visit our website at

<http://tinyurl.com/Workplace-Safety-Registration>

to print a registration form and fax to 08 8363 2225 or post to Safety Conference Reply Paid 2217 Kent Town SA 5071



MEETING OF ACTIVE ASU MEMBERS IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

All members are invited to our first meeting of 2010 to –

- hear more about our federal pay equity case and our campaign for a stronger sector;
- hear more about Award modernisation and what it means for the community sector;
- hear more about community services workers being part of the federal industrial relations system; and

discuss campaign strategies and events during 2010.

Active Members Meeting

Come along from
5.30pm to 7.00pm

Wednesday 10 February

ASU Office, 5 - 9 Rundle Street Kent Town

Light refreshments served.

Please RSVP to Gail Dean on 8363 1322 or at gdean@asu-sant.asn.au by Friday 5 February 2010

LOBBYING FOR PAY EQUITY FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES WORKERS!

In the lead up to the State Election on 20 March 2010, we want to ensure that all state parliamentarians are aware of the need to address urgent workforce issues affecting our sector so that the sector is strong and able to continue to provide quality services to South Australians.

We want to ensure that parliamentarians are aware of our pay equity case and the need for its outcomes to be funded. We want the work the community sector does and its importance to our economy and to building a socially inclusive state understood.

In the lead up to the election we are holding a lobbying forum for the sector and invite all in the sector to attend. We will then be undertaking co-ordinated lobbying activities as part of our campaign for pay equity and a strong and sustainable community sector. Be part of your campaign and come along!

Lobbying Forum

Come along from
1.00 pm to 5.00 pm on

Tuesday 2 March 2010

ASU Office, 5 - 9 Rundle Street Kent Town

Light refreshments served.

Please RSVP to Gail Dean on 8363 1322 or at gdean@asu-sant.asn.au by Friday 5 February 2010

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