



4 November 2020

Premier Daniel Andrews
1 Treasury Place
East Melbourne
Victorian 3002

Dear Premier,

Re: Unfair Hospital Surge Allowance

As you know, after 4000 HWU members recently signed our petition calling for a COVID allowance, the Victorian Government announced a "Hospital Surge Allowance" to be paid to Victorian public hospital workers. This allowance equates up to \$1800 over an 18-week period for non-clinical hospital workers.

As well-intentioned as this allowance may be, the vast majority of non-clinical workers view it as grossly unfair. In fact, over 85% of recently surveyed public sector HWU members expressed that "all non-clinical workers should receive it". Further, over 75% expressed that it was "completely unfair" that clinical workers in a 'red zone' receive up to \$60 per shift, whilst non-clinical workers receive only \$20 per shift.

Regrettably, we've had feedback from members that the allowance is creating resentment and division within hospital workplaces.

The HWU believes all public hospital workers play an important role in our health system and every non-clinical worker should receive this. The COVID19 virus does not discriminate. A PSA working in a COVID ward has just as much contact as a COVID patient (if not more), as a Registered Nurse. The risk is equal. The work is important. Surely a PSA deserves to be treated equally in this scenario?

Whilst an allowance is welcome, the HWU has received strong feedback from many members that feel insulted by the Victorian Government that clinical workers are receiving a significantly higher allowance rate. It is clear that HWU members view the allowance disparity between clinical and non-clinical workers as unfair, divisive and discriminatory.

If COVID does not discriminate, why should the Victorian Government discriminate? I ask that you reconsider the breadth of the allowance to include all non-clinical hospital workers and that non-clinical employees working in COVID 'Red Zones' are paid a shift allowance of \$60.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diana Asmar".

Diana Asmar
Secretary, Health Workers Union

“Caring for our Caregivers”