

Our Ref.: DH HO.009.14

Hon Robyn McSweeney MLC
Chair
Legislation Committee
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Perth WA 6000

17 January, 2014

Dear Ms McSweeney

Re: HSUWA submission on Workforce Reform Bill 2013

The Health Services Union of Western Australia (HSUWA) represents more than 20,000 allied health and health science professionals, technicians and assistants, clerical and administrative staff, supervisors and managers. HSUWA members work in Western Australia's public and private hospitals and health services, pathology, radiology, aged care, disability services, community pharmacy, and dental practices.

The HSUWA is concerned that the proposed *Workforce Reform Bill 2013* (the Bill) and supports the submission made by UnionsWA to the Standing Committee calling for the Bill to be rejected in its entirety.

In addition to the points made in the UnionsWA submission, there are concerns specific to HSUWA members which we would like to raise.

Last year the HSUWA expressed alarm about the cuts to staff being made at Sir Charles Gardner Hospital and the South Metropolitan Health Service. Recent budget blowouts caused by the decisions to pay \$53 million to Serco and spend another \$67 million to the new Perth Children's Hospital have also placed pressure on the job security of our members – particularly those employed on contracts. The Bill as it stands lines up workers to bear the primary burden of fixing the government's budget mismanagement.

Given this situation, the Bill's proposed changes to redundancy and redeployment arrangements are particularly worrying. They will amount to a reduction in employment rights for HSUWA members in the public sector at a time when the health budget is under pressure. This is particularly obnoxious as the Bill also reduces the independence of the WAIRC – thus leaving public sector workers with fewer rights than those in the private sector.

The Bill's privileging of the state government's *Public Sector Wages Policy* for 2014 is also of deep concern. The HSUWA has commenced the bargaining period for a replacement enterprise agreement from 1 July 2014 and is committed to bargaining in good faith. However it is hard to accept that the state government feels the same way when it seeks to legislate itself the unilateral power to impose a cap of no more than 'projected CPI' on any pay rise. Writing policy into legislation in this way is a way of bypassing accountability for the ways in which government deals with its workforce.

HSUWA members work alongside Doctors and Nurses in providing high quality health services to the West Australian community. Pay rises for HSUWA members pegged at projected CPI of 2.5% per annum for the next three years (7.5%) will cause considerable workplace tension and disharmony in light of recent government agreement to a minimum of 11% for Doctors and the political fix prior to the last State Election of 14% for Nurses.

HSUWA would like the opportunity to speak to and give evidence about the content of the *Workforce Reform Bill* directly to the Standing Committee. Please contact me on 08 9328 5155 or dhill@hsuwa.com.au to discuss matters further.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Hill', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dan Hill
Secretary