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# Psychologists' Agreement Has Government Go Ahead

The Victorian Public Health Sector (Medical Scientists, Pharmacists & Psychologists) Enterprise Agreement 2016-2020 had been signed off by the Victorian Government and should go out for distribution in early October 2017 and **be put to vote through a ballot on 11 October 2017.**

The significant outcomes for psychologists in this new agreement are:

- ✓ **13% increase in wages and allowances**
- ✓ **\$750 good will payment**
- ✓ **Extra week of leave**
- ✓ **Better workload provisions and leave replacement**
- ✓ **Stricter rules around vacant positions**
- ✓ **Rostering principles and protocols**
- ✓ **Payment of unauthorised overtime**
- ✓ **Use of other forms of leave**
- ✓ **Meal breaks, staffing meetings and training**
- ✓ **Part time employment options**
- ✓ **Higher duties**
- ✓ **Family violence leave**

The new agreement will see wages and allowances (excluding travel allowances) increase by 13% over the four years of the agreement, 3.25% each year commencing on the first pay period on or after 25 January 2017. This is a 0.75% increase from the 2012-2016 agreement.

**A one-off good will payment of \$750** (pro rata for part time) paid on the first pay period on or after registration of the agreement with the Fair Work Commission (FWC). **Psychologists have also won an extra week of leave that includes leave loading.**

The new agreement sees better workload provisions to maintain safe staffing and workload levels. Psychologists positions when the incumbent is absent on planned and unplanned leave will have to be backfilled. Planned leave includes 2 or more weeks of annual, parental and long service leave, leave without pay, professional development and study leave and WorkCover. Psychologists will also be backfilled during unplanned leave such as personal leave. In both cases, replacements are to be paid at same classification and grade level of staff absent under most situations. Staff replacement includes rules to be followed should backfill not occur such as accounting for efforts to backfill, reducing usual duties, no secondary duties, overtime to be unreasonably required and appropriate support on returning officers who find work that must be completed.

Further to backfilling positions, arrangements will be made to advertise and fill vacant positions as soon as a vacancy is known. During any period that a Psychologist position becomes vacant and filled, the position is backfilled or workload managed where priority duties are adjusted by reducing normal duties.

We also see new rostering principles and protocols to protect Psychologists from excessive workload and fatigue and ensure safety and work/life balance, balancing weekend work, night shifts and RDOs/ADOs.

Provision of criteria to claim unauthorised overtime and ability to use other leave in addition to any period of parental leave.

Employers now cannot require staff to attend staff meetings or training during your meal break and if in exceptional circumstances they do, afford you another break or pay you time and a half.

The new agreement allows for staff to reduce their hours as transition to retirement, family responsibilities or personal health reasons on a temporary or permanent basis, providing for more flexible working arrangements and work/life balance.

Now if you are working higher duties for longer than a year you are entitled to move to the next pay point for the higher duty classification.