

## NEW MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES STAFF CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

HACSU members working in Victorian Public Mental Health services have launched a major campaign to address the clinical staffing vacancy crisis.

There are currently 350 vacant clinical positions across the state, this will soon be compounded by the need for an additional 350 positions in the forensic system with extensions to Ravenhall Prison and Thomas Embling Hospital scheduled to open in 2022.

HACSU representatives have written to Minister Martin Foley, informing him of the launch of the campaign and HACSU's detailed solution to fix the crisis.

HACSU members across the state are identifying intolerable workloads as a result of the vacancies, compromising the safety of staff and consumers.

The situation is steadily getting worse and the State Government not be able to open the planned new Forensic services as a result of the staffing shortage. The Government must invest in training Australian clinicians as international recruitment opportunities have dried up.

### FIX THE STAFFING CRISIS - INVEST IN PEOPLE.

#### HACSU members have offered the following solution to the Minister.

1. Bring back the Mental Health Major at Victorian Universities.
2. Introduction of Mental Health cadetships.
3. Employ more Graduate Nurses. (90 Graduates in the 1st year, 90 Graduates and 90 Post Graduates in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th years. 90 Post Graduates in the 5th year. Out of the 90 employees, 60 would be nurses and 30 would be Allied Health Professionals. This is an additional 720 staff, or \$72 million over 5 years.
4. Bring forward the EBA commitment to employ more Allied Health Educators. They are currently to be introduced in the 4th year per the EBA, this needs to be brought forward to occur immediately.
5. Employ more PSO's and Clinical staff in the Community, thus providing more time for clinicians to focus on actual clinical work.

**Please support our campaign – Invest in people! Call or email Paul Healey on 0401 487 235 or [paulh@hacsu.asn.au](mailto:paulh@hacsu.asn.au)**

The staffing shortages are also affecting other areas of clinical policy, such as the commitment to reduced seclusion. HACSU members report very little has changed in relation to this policy due to vacancies.

HACSU members remain committed to improving service delivery, participating in existing Departmental processes, however, members are alarmed at the failure of government to address the systemic issues in Mental Health long before the crisis hit.

HACSU's correspondence to the Minister had outlined a detailed plan to fix the Mental Health crisis. This included improving the Mental Health education and training system, employing more graduate and post graduate nurses, bringing forward the employment of allied health educators and utilising more PSOs and clinical staff in the community. The initial economic investment of HACSU's plan is modest, yet the result would see a major return in service provision.

HACSU is seeking a meeting with the Minister to discuss the HACSU plan and wants an urgent response from the Minister to our concerns.