**Attention:** [Insert your MP name here]
**By email:** [insert the MP email here]

Dear xxxx,

**RE PUBLIC AREA MENTAL HEALTH ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT – CRISIS AT [Your employer] HEALTH**

I am writing to you as [Insert you role - nurse/lived exp/OT/SW/Admin etc] regarding the major crisis facing our sector due to the lack of action from the Victorian government in settling the public area mental health enterprise agreement.

After 18 months of bargaining, The Health and Community Services Union has been forced to take the decision to launch protected action ballots at a further two public area mental health services, with action ongoing at 15 services including Royal Melbourne. HACSU and its members have no choice but to escalate this campaign.

A disappointing offer was made to my workforce on the 3rd of August 2021, one day prior to the statewide stop work. I note that this was the first offer made after 18 months. **The offer reinforces that the mental health workforce is not valued by the Victorian government and more robust commitments must urgently be made to grow and develop the workforce.**

A 2% pay rise would see nurses, social workers, and occupational therapists worse off than their counterparts in the rest of public health system.

There are still significant and dangerous staffing gaps, with no substantial offer to improve the working conditions of our administrative staff and HACSU’s world-first Reproductive Health and Wellbeing clause has been cast aside.

The rejection of my union’s claims, specifically in relation to mental health educators across the state and better working conditions for the mental workforce, dismisses the findings of the Royal Commission into Mental Health. The findings were clear in that measures to attract and retain staff, incentivization and the implementation of a stronger workplace safety strategy is imperative.

The mental health workforce has not had a pay rise in 2 years and HACSU data shows that least 10% of the workforce are considering leaving the sector all together in 12 months. While I welcome investments in new facilities, I fear that they’ll be stalled in opening due to staffing shortages.

**It is my view that workforce investment must come first.**

My colleagues and I on the frontline of delivering critical mental health services across the state are committed to assisting your government in implementing every single recommendation of the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

But I cannot stay silent when Members of Parliament do not advocate for the very people who are tasked with implementing these lifesaving services for the Victorian community.

Kind regards,