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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mental Health Workers Vote to Move Forward on Offer

Tentative Agreement Reached on Public Mental Health

For two years, HACSU members have been fighting for a better deal in mental health. We have been taking action across the state, strong in our belief that Victoria deserves a better mental health system. This month, 84% of members have voted yes to move forward with the Victorian Government's latest offer regarding the Victorian Public Mental Health Enterprise Agreement. Protected Action has been suspended until the end of November, while the Union and the Victorian Hospitals' Industrial Association have finalised wording of the agreement.

HACSU members have voted to progress an offer that includes a number of members' key claims. Alongside wage increases, HACSU has cemented a wage structure and qualification payment for the lived experience workforce. An allied health structure to be developed within the first 6 months of the agreement. Our landmark claim for a mental health allowance, supported by the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Mental Health, means that allied health professionals, administrative and clerical staff, and the lived experience workforces will receive yearly payments in recognition of their specialist skills, totalling over \$7000 per worker.

This year has shown the importance of adequate leave is for worker wellbeing, especially for frontline health workers. We have secured annual leave equity for allied health, bringing them in line with their nursing colleagues. Access to long service leave has been secured, as well as leave for pregnancy loss for primary and non-primary caregivers. Parental leave has been increased, with four more weeks for the primary caregiver and one more week for the secondary. HACSU's full Reproductive Health and Wellbeing claim will be introduced once it has been enshrined in State Government policy — marking a major development for all workers in Victoria.

Marking a win for our We Stand for Super campaign, superannuation will now be paid when it is earned — and will be paid on all paid or unpaid parental leave. A full-time worker on an average wage, from age 20 to 67 could earn an extra \$12,475 by their retirement if their contributions were paid fortnightly instead of quarterly. This is a wonderful step forward for all members, particularly women, to ensure that they are retiring with more superannuation.

These are fantastic wins, and HACSU members should be proud of what they've achieved together — but this isn't the end of our fight for mental health workers. We are disappointed that the Victorian Department of Health are still unwilling to provide pay parity for the allied health workforce. Whilst the retention bonus will put allied health at higher equivalent wage outcome percentage, these workers are starting from a lower base of pay.

HACSU will continue to fight for pay equity for allied health workforces. We believe in "one sector, one wage", and we call on the Victorian Government to listen to the allied health workforce. Without a united workforce treated equally, we cannot build a better mental health system.

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