

SACS CARE CLAIM DISCUSSION PAPER

Wage Parity and New Career Pathways

The ASU calls for the establishment of new pathways for staff employed in social and community services. The ASU calls for a least three career pathways:

- Case Workers, Support Workers, Community Development Workers
- Leadership,
- Specialist workers.

Career pathways for **Case Workers, Support Workers, Community Development Workers**, shall be created by:

- Abolishing Grade 1.
- Converting Grade 2 to a Grade that is an entry point and where all work is directly supervised.
- Re-classifying all current Grade 2 workers to the new Grade 3/4
- The provision of funding to bring all staff to certificate iv level by 2012
- Amalgamating Grades 3 and 4 of the current SACS award to create an 8 step incremental scale and then bringing them into alignment with rates of pay in the public sector
- The provision of funding to provide for 5,000 HECS free places in Universities for degree courses approved by the Social and Community Services Accreditation Board in 2013, 2014 and 2015.

This career pathway will be aligned against the education and certification pathways identified below.

The Establishment of a Social and Community Services Accreditation and Certification Board

The ASU calls for the establishment of the Social and Community Services Accreditation and Certification Board. The Board will have responsibility for the registration or accreditation of all service providers and for the certification of all staff. The Board shall be comprised of an equal number of employer and union representatives.

The ASU calls for the certification of all staff engaged in social and community services. The Certification shall be against a set of standards determined by the Social and Community Services Accreditation and Certification Board. Over time these standards

will be aligned with education pathways, which will be established by the Board and career pathways which will be determined by the industrial parties.

By 2015 these accreditation pathways will be embedded in university degree courses.

Between 2009 and 2015, all existing staff will be accredited to these new standards using a system or Recognition of Prior Learning.

Improved Leave Entitlements

The Social and Community Services Industry is facing a serious staffing crisis. In addition to the longer term structural approaches outlined above, the ASU calls for the following improvements in conditions of employment for staff in the industry.

- The introduction of portable long service leave from the beginning of 2010 with a commitment to provide start up funding in the 2009-10 State Budget.
- Access to LSL after five years and three months after ten years.
- A career break scheme allowing workers to take a year off in every five
- Introduction of 26 weeks paid maternity leave with a beginning being made in the 2009 State Budget with the provision of funding for 14 weeks from January 2010.

The introduction of 6 weeks annual leave for all shift workers.

The introduction of paid study leave for those staff undertaking at their own expense work related courses of study, and, the provision of funding by government to employ replacement staff.

Safe Workplaces and Quality support

The ASU calls for the establishment of client staff ratios for all services and increased funding to meet these standards. However the way in which ratios are implemented in workplaces must ensure that flexibility is not restricted but rather that client services are enhanced.

The ASU calls on governments to commit to fund to these ratios.

The ASU calls upon employers

and governments to establish safe staffing arrangements so as to ensure the occupational health and safety of clients and staff. Staff should only work alone in an environment where a comprehensive risk assessment has been undertaken. Unless this has occurred then no workplace shall be staffed by a single worker working alone.

The ASU calls for an end to sleepovers. Workers who are required to be in attendance at work should be paid with the appropriate shift penalty. This brings SACS workers in line with public sector workers and will lead to safer workplaces and a higher quality of support for clients.

The ASU calls for "paid handover time" of a minimum of 30 minutes at all shift changes – funding to be provided in the 2009 Budget. Many services have longer paid handover time which is appropriate for the client group and service model. These must be maintained.

Reform the Funding System

Funding for Quality Service Delivery – addressing workforce development issues.

Government currently funds Social and Community Services on the basis of what it budgets rather than on the basis of quality service delivery. The ASU calls for a review by State and Federal governments in partnership with the industry to assess and determine the levels of funding required ensuring quality service delivery by the attraction and retention of a highly skilled, well educated and well paid workforce.

An end to competitive tendering and short term funding.

Competitive tendering is an economic model of funding based on "lowest cost service delivery". It is inappropriate in the community sector that relies on co-operation and capacity building. The ASU calls for the accreditation of all service providers to appropriate levels (see below), the abolition of competitive tendering, and, the implementation of a new model of funding that enables a simple registration process for organizational details and an initial assessment as to suitability and viability and then a preferred

provider system be utilized. Likewise, short term funding is often a Band-Aid solution that short-changes clients. It is inefficient because set up costs and time are constantly required to establish agencies which then wind down until the next round of funding emerges. It sets up false expectations for clients.

New models to calculate supplementation so that funding keeps pace with increased costs.

The ASU calls for a total review of supplementation mechanisms to ensure that in future grants are increased annually to keep pace with increased cost. The failure of government to adequately supplement grants means that the real value of grants is eroded over time resulting in service cuts. The supplementation must be planned in a regular and reliable way and its provision must be timely in delivery.

Accreditation of all Service Providers – Quality Services and cutting red tape.

The ASU calls for the establishment of the Social and Community Services Accreditation and Certification Board. The Board will have responsibility for the registration or accreditation of all service providers and for the certification of all staff. The Board shall be comprised of an equal number of employer and union representatives.

The ASU calls for government to require all services to participate in a system of service registration, quality assessment or accreditation of all service providers to a set of Industry Standards by 2011 to ensure Quality Service Delivery and this should be developed in consultation with the Sector and ASU.

These standards are to be developed by Social and Community Services Accreditation and Certification Board and must be specific to service type. Accreditation should significantly reduce the grant application and acquittal processes. Governments should then use this system to avoid unnecessary duplication.

The ASU calls on government to provide funding to bring all current service providers to the standards required.