

2021

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION OF
20 AUGUST 2020 - HEALTH WORKERS

Presented by:
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This report outlines the collaborative work underway between Canberra Health Services (CHS) and Shared Services to examine payroll issues, as required by a Legislative Assembly motion on 20 August 2020.

This matter came to light following the identification by Junior Medical Officers (JMOs) of discrepancies within their payslips, which resulted in both overpayments and underpayments to these staff.

CHS works hard to ensure that all entitlements are paid correctly to employees and when an issue is raised, an investigation is undertaken to find and rectify the cause of the issue and amend any incorrect payments. CHS undertakes this work through its People and Culture Division in partnership with Shared Services, which administers the Payroll system.

Pay Discrepancies

Shared Services and CHS (as the lead agency) have conducted a comprehensive review of the interpretation of the JMO entitlements in relation to overtime and penalties within the Medical Practitioners Enterprise Agreement. There were two issues identified that are likely to account for most discrepancies in JMO pay.

The first issue relates to time worked in excess of 10 hours in any one shift being paid at overtime rates. Previously, Shared Services Payroll had been processing this provision based on time in excess of 10 hours being 'overtime', which meant that Superannuation Guarantee payments were not made on that additional time when rostered as a regular shift. However, this approach also meant that only 10 hours leave was deducted for missed shifts rather than the full number of hours rostered. This interpretation has been clarified and the provision will be applied such that rostered time in excess of 10 hours in any one shift will be paid at 'overtime rates' being a type of penalty rate, rather than as overtime, such that the Superannuation Guarantee payment will continue to apply to the whole period of a rostered shift.

The second issue related to the payment of overtime to JMOs for work performed on a public holiday. The error resulted in payments being made at time and one half rather than double time for the first two hours of overtime and is believed to have affected public holiday payments since 2017, until rectified for the Easter long weekend in 2020, resulting in underpayments for JMOs who have worked public holidays since that time.

The Territory undertook to identify all affected JMOs, notify them of the issue and back pay any outstanding amounts. All underpayment calculations were finalised, and adjustments paid to impacted JMOs on payday 18 February 2021.

Reduction in Manual Calculations

It was identified that a significant contributing factor in errors occurring is that many of the calculations were manual and therefore subject to varying levels of expertise and interpretation. To address this issue, Shared Services developed and commenced the use of an Excel tool. CHS has also moved the JMOs onto the latest version of the Rostering system. This should be completed in full by the end of June 2021. This will enable the timesheets to be electronically processed by Shared Services more efficiently and enable any disputes to be resolved quickly.

Payslip Transparency

The Excel automated calculator and movement of the JMOs onto the newest version of the Proact Rostering system will increase the amount of information available to the JMOs.

Streamlining process for pay issues

It has been agreed between CHS and Shared Services that the CHS Medical Officer Support Credentialing Education Training Unit will continue to respond to any pay disputes raised with them in the first instance and attempt to resolve them as they currently do. If a matter is referred to Shared Services or comes to them directly then the pay team has a standardised pathway and communications that provide a greater level of detail on how the error occurred and what adjustment will be made to rectify it. Shared Services Payroll also has at least one staff member on site at Canberra Hospital to answer any pay queries resulting from the distribution of payslips on the Monday of pay week.