Tasmanian Public Sector Health Professionals Work Together to Achieve Justice.

Tim Jacobson – Assistant Secretary Health and Community Services Union (HSU Tasmania No. 1 Branch)
A little about HACSU

- Cover all Classifications of workers in Tassie (including nurses) in the Health and Community Services Industry. Aged, Acute Hospitals (Public and Private), Disability Services, Community Services, Diagnostic Services…
- Have 7800 financial members (making HACSU the largest Union in Tasmania)
- Have 3 Offices in Hobart, Launceston and Devonport
Tasmanian health professionals were amongst the lowest paid in Australia.

Only 3 of the 20 health professions train in Tasmania so attracting graduates is essential.

Existing classification structures did not encourage experienced staff to remain in the system.

Government reports highlighted the problem – but no action
National Salary Situation Analysis – March 2005

Average AHP Salary State By State Comparison

March 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Average Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>$67,804</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vic</td>
<td>$58,994</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>$58,760</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>$58,473</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>$54,763</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tas</td>
<td>$52,538</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>$52,139</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>$49,879</td>
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</table>

HSU W.A Branch had reached “in principle” agreement which will allow for progression from base to $68,628.

HACSU Tasmania agreement allows for automatic Progression from base to $62,549 plus National nexus for the next three years.
How such a massive change?

- Government embarked on Workforce Planning Process in 2001
- Workforce Planning Status report released in 2003
- The report highlighted massive recruitment and retention problems across most professions.
- Unions had highlighted the issues in the media for in excess of 12 months
- Professional associations were keen to work with unions (and unions prepared to work together) to achieve a decent outcome.
- It became a campaign about better services to Tasmanians – It was not about more money and conditions
Getting Started

☐ Surveyed Members.
 ☐ Development of a joint union single log of claims that was then communicated to all members at meetings.
 ☐ key campaign themes were developed and recognisable logos/slogans determined (Posters, bumper stickers, leaflets for clients/patients etc..)
Getting Started Cont.

- HP Union contacts/Activists identified for each workplace and Profession. Union Organisers were allocated to particular professions regardless of which Union they belonged.

- Regular updates were emailed out to members and Statewide meetings occurred.

- Campaign was launched publicly. “Health Professionals Campaigning for better Services to the Tasmanian Community”. We used the Governments own stats extracted from the WFP Report.
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

nuclear medicine technologist
occupational therapist
speech pathologist
medical scientist
dental therapist
social worker
physiotherapist
radiographer
podiatrist
pharmacist
dietician
psychologist
medical physicist
counsellors
health librarian
orthotist/prosthetist
...and many other professionals

“Health is more than Doctors and Nurses. Unless we can recruit and retain skilled Health Professionals the Tasmanian community will suffer”

...Backbone of our health system
Activating Allies – Getting Together.

Organised a meeting that brought together:

- Key union delegates from each profession;
- Representatives of the Professional Associations;
- Lobby groups and special interest groups;
- Professional peak body endorsed campaign and agreed to joint badging.
Activating Allies – Planning.

Planned the campaign including:

- Agreed goals;
- Communication paths;
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

All parties agreed the professions must remain united or the Government would pick off the squeaky wheels i.e. radiation therapists (Trojan Mice).
Organising Members and Building Power.

- A table of key contacts across the professions was developed ensuring regions were represented.
- Each profession was asked to rewrite their award classification standards based on general model.
- Key contacts took responsibility for this task including involving as many members as possible. This activity gave a feeling of ownership and commitment to outcomes.
Education of Key Contacts

- Key contacts were originally activated through their involvement profession specific tasks i.e. Developing Classifications Standards
- Each task gave us an opportunity to educate them on the campaign to come and prepare them as our key activists in that campaign.
- Activist kits etc were useful tools in moving the whole group forward.
Taking Action.

Government rejects claim for pay parity and seeks to refer matter to the Industrial Commission so the unions can run a work value case.

- Key contacts network used to activate members.
- A Statewide Campaign Committee was endorsed (The Committee had authority to implement industrial action)
- Key contacts develop effective bans profession by profession and implement them.
- Huge turnout at stop work meetings.
Communication

- Early in the campaign email networks were established so that all members could be contacted quickly.
- Regular updates were sent out to all members so we were able to communicate our messages in a timely fashion and refute Government spin.
- This was the only way we communicated with members.
Discussions Continue but Light Reported in Tunnel.

The CPSU and HACSU met again with Government negotiators on Wednesday 3 August 2005.

The negotiations were extremely productive. Government negotiators recognised that our claim sought to deal with both salary and classification matters and that without a solution to both our long standing problems with attraction and retention would not be resolved.

Unions also reminded the negotiators of the need to address important condition matters as part of any overall outcome. It was made clear that unless these matters were dealt with it was unlikely members would vote to accept the nexus arrangements.

Some of the conditions matters specifically raised included recognition of Post Graduate Qualifications, staffing and workload issues and Professional Development.

Unions have received a number of calls from members seeking information with regard to how a nexus arrangement works particularly in relation to any future increases.

In simple terms once each year an assessment is made (based upon an agreed formula) on what has been the average increase paid to Health Professions in all other States and Territories, this average is then paid to Tasmanian Health Professionals.

The formula for determining this is currently the subject of negotiations.

Clearly, given the nature of our claim, the negotiations are extremely complex however, if the most recent negotiations provide some indication, it is hoped that the process will not be a lengthy one.

Your Campaign Committee continues to meet regularly and is closely monitoring the negotiations.

It was one year and sixteen days ago that your log of claims was served on the Government - but it doesn’t take that long to deal with politicians pay claims!

Authorised by Tom Lynch, CPSU and Chris Brown, HACSU
Support From Allies.

At each stage of the campaign we could rely on our allies publicly supporting our position.

- Media releases were sent to professional associations so they could add comment.
- Media were provided with the names of community and lobby groups who could speak in support.
- This resulted in significant media interest.
Victory – Well Sort Of.

- On 11 July 05 the Premier announces the Government will offer health professionals pay parity with their mainland counterparts.
- Members had sustained and continued to escalate industrial action for 2 months. This included bans and limitations and Rolling Strikes.
- Members had to take further action when the Government attempted to resolve the problems with simple wages increases.
In December 2005 the Tasmanian Allied Health Professionals Agreement was registered. The agreement in addition to an up front 8.99% wages increase provides for:

- New Classification and increment levels
- Recognition of Post Graduate Qualifications
- Increased On Call Allowances
Finally - The Outcome!

- A new allowance for employees who provided consultancy work via phone or internet without returning to work.
- A 6.5% Allowance for employees who work in forensic health or prison services.
- Increase Night Shift allowance from 15% to 22.5%.
- Increases for the next three years based on the National average wages increase for HP in all States and Territories.
Lessons and Priorities.

- You must have a plan and commitment to the plan at all levels from the Union Office to Members at workplaces.
- Numbers equal Power – Recruit new members and activists.
- Members (Professions) and Unions sticking together is essential.
- Stick to your message – don’t get caught up in peripheral issues.
- Proper campaigns need proper resources.
- Be prepared to fight, but fight from the higher moral ground. Establish this from the beginning.
What the Tasmanian outcome looks like.
The beginning and and NOW!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Classification</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>New Classification</th>
<th>Salary</th>
<th>Current Salary</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>December 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Stream PF1</td>
<td>Entry Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Level 1 Year 1</td>
<td>To</td>
<td>P1.1</td>
<td>35 769</td>
<td>42 475</td>
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<td>38 002</td>
<td>45 125</td>
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<td>40 415</td>
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<td>68 148</td>
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What the Tasmanian outcome looks like. Then and NOW!

| Professional Stream PF2 | Promotable | Allied Health |  |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|----------------
| Professional Level 2 Year 1 | To P3.1 | 54 967 | 65 522 |
| Professional Level 2 Year 2 | To P3.2 | 57 390 | 68 410 |
| Professional Level 2 Year 3 | To P3.3 | 59 817 | 71 304 |
|                           | P3.4      |               | 73 491 |
|                           | P3.5      |               | 75 155 |
|                           | (Qualified Only) |               |     |

| Professional Stream PF3 | Promotable | Allied Health |  |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------|----------------
| Professional Level 3 Year 1 | To P4.1 | 63 049 | 75 155 |
| Professional Level 3 Year 2 | To P4.2 | 66 283 | 79 011 |
|                           | P4.3      |               | 80 936 |
|                           | P4.4      |               | 83 123 |
|                           | (Qualified Only) |               |     |
What the Tasmanian outcome looks like. Then and NOW!

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Professional Stream PF5</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Professional Specialist</td>
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<td>Professional Level 5</td>
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</table>
Allied Health at the Launceston General Hospital are currently taking action over staffing levels and services.

Last week they took stop work action. While this is serious work, it can also be GREAT FUN !!!!!
Backbone of our health system

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Community & Public Sector Union (SPSFT) Inc.  Tasmanian Health Professionals Council  Health & Community Services Union Tasmania