

Wednesday 22 March, 2017

Nurses see first tranche of Sunday penalty rate cuts thanks to emboldened billion-dollar healthcare employer

Nurses working for Sonic Health Plus could see their award-aligned Sunday penalty rates cut from 75% to 50%, in what is expected to be worrying trend for Australian workers.

Sonic Health Plus nurses are currently on a non-union approved EBA, in which they receive award Sunday penalty rates. The ANMF and other unions opposed the EBA when it was being certified in 2014.

In fresh EBA negotiations, Sonic Health Plus has this week proposed the nurses' Sunday penalty rates are cut by at least a third. This is move seemingly inspired by the Fair Work Commission's recent decision to cut Sunday penalty rates for 700,000 retail, hospitality and pharmacy workers.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"It's no coincidence that Sonic Health Plus has proposed these wage claims just a few days after Prime Minister Turnbull said he supported the penalty rate cuts."

"This is a sign of the times; the Fair Work Commission decision to cut penalty rates has emboldened employers and no Australian worker is safe unless the Government steps in now."

"Just last month Sonic Healthcare, the parent company of Sonic Health Plus, announced a net profit of \$197 million and revenue of \$2.5 billion. Now it wants to cut the wages of its nursing staff."

"The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF), representing Sonic Health Plus nurses, has rejected the attempts to cut the Sunday penalty rates of any nurses during negotiations. Without the support of the ANMF, these nurses would absolutely receive further pay cuts."

"Penalty rates and take home pay must be protected. Prime Minister Turnbull stop the cuts, stand up for working Australians and end any excuse for employers to cut wages."

ENDS

Media contact: Antonia Acott 0418 793 885 or ACTU Media 03 9664 7315

<http://www.actu.org.au/actu-media/media-releases>