

Thursday, 5 April 2012

ACTU Executive endorses recommendation to suspend Health Services Union

Statement from ACTU President Ged Kearney and ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence:

The Executive of the ACTU has today met in Melbourne and voted to suspend the Health Services Union from the ACTU until it can resolve serious issues of governance and financial management.

This decision has been made to send a clear message to the National Executive of the HSU that it must demonstrate it has a plan to deal with governance and financial management issues.

In making this decision, the ACTU Executive is acting in the interests of and to give encouragement to the officials, delegates and members of the HSU who are dedicated to a strong, democratic and accountable union.

The ACTU Executive will continue to provide services and support to members of the HSU. It is essential that no HSU member should be disadvantaged as a result of this decision.

The ACTU reiterates that the central obligation of all union officials above all else is to serve the interests of their members. This is particularly true of elected officials who are entrusted with the management of members' funds.

The Australian union movement has zero tolerance for corruption or the misuse of members' funds or for maladministration of union affairs.

The ACTU is absolutely committed to the transparent and accountable use of members' funds.

The Executive notes that there are a number of investigative and legal processes underway in respect of matters within the HSU National Office, former Victorian No. 1 Branch and HSU East Branch.

It is essential that they be completed and appropriate action taken. The ACTU makes no suggestion of guilt for any individual associated with the union, past or present. Everyone has the right to the presumption of innocence and it is important that due process is allowed while a number of investigations are underway.

The Executive recognises that there are branches within the HSU in respect of which no allegations have been made and that staff and delegates around Australia are dedicated to representing and advocating for their members.

The ACTU Executive has today heard from the HSU's National Executive about actions that have been taken to put in place governance systems to address issues that have been raised.

The suspension of the HSU will apply until the union can prove to the Executive that it has addressed these matters and has an ongoing plan to manage the union, as a whole, properly.

Today's Executive meeting has endorsed a process of regular consultation and monitoring of the HSU's progress in dealing with these issues.

Media contact:

Mark Phillips ph (03) 9664 7266 or 0422 009 011; mphillips@actu.org.au