



MEMBER UPDATE – ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

Secret Plans for “Ground-Breaking Change” Undermine Good Faith Bargaining

4 March 2021

SASMOA representatives, including President Dr David Pope and Chief Industrial Officer Bernadette Mulholland, have been meeting regularly with Employer representatives from the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Department of Health and Wellbeing, and have been very clear that Salaried Medical Officers insist on good faith bargaining.

Unfortunately, the Employer has responded with stalling tactics while refusing to provide any details of their agenda in writing to provide to doctors.

SASMOA suspects this cynical manipulation of the bargaining process is being pursued as a deliberate part of a SA Health and Korda Mentha led secret agenda, because at the same time SASMOA is aware senior SA Health bureaucrats and Local Health Networks are working behind the scenes on the planning of what they are calling an “ambitious reform agenda” attacking your employment conditions.

FOI Bombshell

From emails obtained under Freedom of Information (FOI), SASMOA has uncovered the existence of a report that details a secret “medical industrial strategy” being supported by very senior SA Health bureaucrats which is described as “ground-breaking” and needing “high level political and PR support.”

An email between senior health executives dated 13 March 2020 says:

*“A report had been provided to the Statewide Taskforce on both the **Medical Officers EA management** agenda and private practice, and the timesheet implementation and strategy generally. Our plan was roundly endorsed albeit with the caveat that **ground-breaking change will need heavy financial and legal due diligence together with high level political and PR support**. The development of this plan continues and is being presented to the Statewide Taskforce on 16 March.”*

The delays and the lack of any substantive progress in negotiations to date is evidence of either bad faith bargaining or that the Department of Treasury and Finance and the Health Minister have no control of those senior bureaucrats who plan to smear the reputation of all Salaried Medical Officers.

It is also disturbing that these senior bureaucrats are planning to use “*high level political and PR support*” to manipulate the South Australian community against their public sector medical workforce.

This game-playing and secret strategising has been occurring at the same time as the Employer has refused to acknowledge or address key issues raised by SASMOA members during bargaining, including:

- Fatigue
- Bullying
- Staffing Levels
- Rostering and
- Wage Theft (Unpaid Work)

The Employer's "notions" seek to attack doctor's conditions including:

- Professional Development
- Medical Leadership
- Undermining Dispute Resolution processes
- Recall
- Removing Rights of Private Practice with no compensation
- Removal of the conditions set out in the Human Resources Manual

The Employer has indicated that Salaried Medical Officers will need to accept reductions in conditions/entitlements for an increase of no more than 2 percent in salary, or maybe even less.

SASMOA also suspects that senior bureaucrats in Health are now potentially angling for a short two-year deal, which would end in December 2022, rather than the usual three-year Agreement, in a cynical move to set up the medical workforce for a longer and more sustained attack on employment conditions after the March 2022 state election.

The Employer is on notice that real progress towards an acceptable deal must now be made in the days to come. The Agreement expired in December 2020 and from 14 April 2021 it will be 12 months since the last pay increase for frontline doctors.

Bernadette Mulholland
SASMOA, Chief Industrial Officer
4 March 2021