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Public Sector EBA Update No 23 - 25 November 2011

Victorian Public Sector Nurses and Midwives

25 November 2011 – 7.30 pm

Today I have made a further offer to the Premier, Mr Baillieu. That offer was to enter into a compromise form of arbitration different to that sought by the Government, but also different to that previously proposed by ANF. That offer was made in order that our dispute may be brought to a rapid and fair resolution that respect both our members, the Employers and the Government.

Whilst I note that the Premier has not rejected the offer, he has stated that with continuing industrial action he could not agree to such a proposal. Today I have decided to give him that opportunity.

Members will no doubt be aware that another Full Bench of Fair Work Australia late today issued new Orders stopping our action. The effect of these orders is that any and all industrial action must stop in the 86 'single interest employer authorisation' health services. I am acutely aware and mindful of the resolution of members that industrial action only cease once an agreement is reached that is acceptable to members at a statewide meeting of members. Having discussed this with Paul and Pip, our Branch Executive and our ANF staff I have decided that ANF will comply with those Orders. I do this because my overall objective is to reach an agreement that is acceptable to you, and I believe given the Premier's statements in parliament and through the media, we have an opportunity to achieve this.

I will of course provide further detail at our next statewide meeting at 2.00pm at Festival Hall on Wednesday 30 November.

I know many of you may be confused, upset and disappointed by this decision- I ask that you have trust in the ANF, its Council and staff. This has not been an easy decision, but is one that I strongly believe is in the best interests of our campaign to maintain, extend and improve nurse to patient ratios. We will have the opportunity at Wednesday's meeting to discuss my decision and to consider any response from the Baillieu Government.

I have decided that the wearing of the campaign T-shirts, which is not deemed to be industrial action of itself, should continue, as a constant reminder to the Government and the community of the campaign, while we seek a resolution. All other action must cease no later than 9.00am Saturday 26 November in the SIEA health services listed at the back of the FWA Order. It is critical that we continue to campaign publically, through the media, visits to politicians, and have a strong ANF and community presence outside the Government's marginal seat electoral offices. In addition the events that many of you have organised and will be participating in, in your own time should proceed.

I have agonised over this decision. In the forefront of my mind has been the best interests of members—I will always remember that my duty is to protect and improve the interests and benefits of our members, and I believe that the course of action undertaken meets that test. In the same way that we are advocates for our patients till the day we die, I will work tirelessly and strategically to ensure that I can stand proudly before you with an agreement that shows you RESPECT.