

MEDIA RELEASE

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Doctors' Union to target wage theft, fatigue, workloads & work/life balance in negotiations starting today

The South Australian Doctors' Union says it will target wage theft, workloads, fatigue and work/life balance in Enterprise Bargaining negotiations with the state government, which commence today.

The Salaried Medical Officers Association (SASMOA) represents thousands of doctors who work in South Australia's public hospitals and community health systems.

SASMOA President Dr David Pope says SASMOA is looking for constructive intervention from the state government to fix a range of issues created by the Health Department's administration.

Dr Pope says **WAGE THEFT** is endemic, especially for the state's Interns, Resident Medical Officers and Registrars, who are often not being paid for all the hours they work.

"Setting up a system so you are accurately paid for the hours you actually work should not be difficult or controversial," Dr Pope says. "These doctors are the work horses of the public health system – and they are being systematically under-paid under a structure of insecure work and under-resourced health units."

Dr Pope says unrealistic rostering and inadequate breaks within and between shifts are causing **DANGEROUS LEVELS OF FATIGUE** for junior and senior doctors.

"Doctors are doing long shifts, often without breaks, and then being expected to roll up again eight hours later or be on-call day after day," Dr Pope says.

"They don't have enough hours in the day to do everything that's expected of them, and they very often can't get the leave they are due because there aren't enough staff to backfill positions. The Health Department does not take fatigue seriously and it has consequences – for both doctors and patients."

Dr Pope says the recommendations of a recent parliamentary report into fatigue and bullying have barely been given lip-service by the Health Department.

"There was an excellent report on fatigue and bullying produced by a South Australian parliamentary committee in February," Dr Pope says. "That report produced 27 recommendations which the Department has essentially fobbed off. As just one example, SASMOA will be doing our own fatigue scan using the Department's own tool – because the Department won't commit to leadership in this area."

Dr Pope says many of the Health Department's systems and processes are broken, including rostering and workload planning and management.

"Doctors are also desperate to have their voices better **EMBEDDED INTO HEALTH LEADERSHIP**," Dr Pope says. "We have seen good results during COVID largely because health administrators have listened to clinicians. There must be more of this across all aspects of the health system to achieve better health care results for all South Australians."

"The Enterprise Bargaining period is the best opportunity to achieve real accountability and change regarding these issues and we look forward to constructive dialogue with the state government."