



South Australian Salaried Medical Officers Association

MEMBER UPDATE

SA HEALTH REACHES ALARMING NEW DEPTHS IN SURVEY RANKING FOI reveals “I Work For SA” 2021 Your Voice Survey Results

2 November 2021

SASMOA can reveal for the first time the alarming feedback that medical officers provided to the State Government regarding SA Health in the 2021 “I Work For SA” survey.

The results show grave concerns about workplace resourcing and safety as well as medical officers’ personal wellbeing, with the results well below other agencies and levels which should be regarded as acceptable.

SASMOA was forced to obtain the breakdown of survey results for medical officers under Freedom of Information, because SA Health denied our request to provide the results.

SASMOA will follow up with the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment about whether the Executives under whose watch these results have occurred will be performance managed.

RESPONSE RATE

There were 707 Medical Officer respondents to the 2021 “I Work For SA” Survey (out of 4,500). The response rate reflects that Medical Officers are already flat out – and not inclined to waste time when they do not believe it will achieve anything.

Indeed only 21% of Medical Officers who did respond believed that action would be taken on the results of the survey, with 51% explicitly believing it would not.

This of course tallies with our current experience with Enterprise Bargaining negotiations – SA Health continues to prove they simply won’t listen to or act on your workplace concerns.

KEY THEMES

Despite the low engagement, some strong themes emerged:

- **SA Health’s “Employee Wellbeing Score” is terrible:** Medical officers have major concerns about workplace resourcing and safety as well as their own and their colleagues’ personal wellbeing.
- **SA Health’s “Executive Leadership Index” is poor:** Medical officers consistently identified poor personal modelling of “leadership” by Executives.

More detail on each of these areas is below.

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING (AND SAFETY) SCORE

*According to the survey: “The **Wellbeing Score** measures the extent to which employees feel supported in maintaining their health and wellbeing”*

The overall “Employee Wellbeing Score” for medical officers is 43%, which is -8% from SA Health’s already poor overall result and -18% from the overall SA public sector. According to the report, the average score for large agencies is 59%.

There are five key questions regarding employee wellbeing. The first two questions are about resourcing:

- I am provided with the **tools and equipment** to do my job **safely** (only 56% positive, which is -9% from SA Health and -19% from the overall SA public sector).
- My workgroup has the **tools and resources** to **perform well** (only 45% positive, which is -6% from SA Health and -15% from the overall SA public sector).

These results are extraordinarily alarming for a health setting. Having only around half of medical officers positively say they have adequate tools, equipment and resources to do their job safely or perform well must be challenged and improved.

The next questions are about personal wellbeing:

- I think my LHN **cares about my health and wellbeing** (only 33% positive, which is -8% from SA Health and -21% from the overall SA public sector)
- I am able to strike the right **balance** between my work and home life (only 39% positive, which is -9% from SA Health and -16% from the overall SA public sector)
- I am satisfied with the processes/practices in place to help me manage **my health and wellbeing** (only 40% positive, which is -10% from SA Health and -20% from overall SA public sector)

Other relevant questions include:

- I am satisfied with my ability to access and use flexible working arrangements (e.g. flexible hours of work, patterns of work, locations of work or other arrangements) - only 42% positive, which is -10% from SA Health and -21% from overall SA public sector
- The work processes we have in place allow me to be as productive as possible: 53% negative and only 31% positive, which is -15% from SA Health and -20% from overall SA public sector

These results re-enforce SASMOA’s approach to Enterprise Agreement negotiations, which is to focus on fatigue-busting workplace measures which will improve the health and wellbeing of salaried doctors, including proper staff planning and breaks within and between shifts.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP INDEX

*According to the survey: “The **Leadership Index** measures perceptions of how effectively senior leaders (i.e. Executives and Executive Directors) communicate their vision for the LHN, enable advancement and inspire their people through their actions and behaviours.”*

The overall “Leadership Index” score is 40%, which is -4% from SA Health and -12% from the overall SA public sector. According to the report, the average score for large agencies is 51%.

Key questions include:

- I feel that senior managers effectively lead and manage change (only 32% positive, which is -5% from SA Health and -12% from overall SA public sector)
- I believe senior managers provide clear direction for the future of the LHN (only 33% positive, which is -5% from SA Health and -14% from overall SA public sector)
- I feel that senior managers model the behaviours expected of employees (only 38% positive, which is -3% from SA Health and -11% from overall SA public sector)
- My LHN focuses on improving the work we do (only 48% positive, which is -8% from SA Health and -17% from the overall SA public sector)

- How often do you feel that the senior leaders in your LHN act in accordance with SA Public Sector Values in their everyday work? (only 50% positive, which is -6% from SA Health and -15% from the overall SA public sector)
- Senior managers promote collaboration between my LHN and other LHNs or organisations we work with (only 31% positive, which is -8% from SA Health and -20% from the overall SA public sector)

Other relevant questions from elsewhere in the survey include:

- My LHN motivates me to help me achieve its objectives (only 37% positive, which is -8% from SA Health and -16% from the overall SA public sector)

It should be emphasised that the 'Leadership Index' questions relate specifically to *Executive Leadership*. More local workplace leadership scored much higher, as indicated below.

BEST AND WORST

The results were not all bad.

The highest scoring **positive** questions (i.e. the most positive responses) were:

- I understand what is expected of me to do well in my role: 90%
- The people in my workgroup behave in an accepting manner towards people from diverse backgrounds: 84%
- My job makes good use of my skills and abilities: 83%
- People in my workgroup are committed to workplace safety: 82%
- My manager treats me with respect: 82%

These results show medical officers have generally high regard for their immediate colleagues.

In addition, 76% of Medical Officers also say they are 'fairly remunerated' for the work they do, which is +18% from all SA Health and +15% from overall SA public sector.

While being 'fairly remunerated' is a good thing, it does not provide a 'green light' to an employer to not pay employees for all work done (such as happens with unrostered overtime with TMOs) or to not provide a fair pay increase when it becomes due.

The highest scoring **negative** questions (i.e. the most negative responses) were:

- The work processes we have in place allow me to be as productive as possible: 53% negative
- I believe action will be taken by my LHN on the results of this survey: 51% negative
- I feel that senior managers effectively lead and manage change: 47% negative
- I think my LHN cares about my health and wellbeing: 44% negative

So ... medical officers are generally satisfied with their pay but not their (unsafe) working conditions and wellbeing, feel executive leadership is poor, and don't believe SA Health will act on feedback.

These are all things that can be changed for the better if the Government has the will to do so.

You can read the full survey results obtained under FOI [here](#). Please note – poor quality PDF was provided to SASMOA.

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