



Social Workers join ASU rally for community sector pay and conditions

AASW members will be joining the Australian Services Union Respect the Workers rally for better pay and conditions in the non Government sector in Victoria.

The rally will leave from Parliament Gardens in Melbourne at 11 on Tuesday morning (November 10).

Around 1 in 5 AASW members works in the not for profit sector, providing a wide range of services to Australians. Social Workers work in drug and alcohol services, community health centres, housing services, mental health services, family violence services and child and family welfare services.

Social workers often provide the backbone to community sector organisations. The Social work degree equips people with the skills, values and knowledge to work in the community sector.

Professor Bob Lonne, AASW National President, said, “The Victorian Government must demonstrate that it has a strategy to recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce to deliver vital community services to low income and vulnerable Victorians. Raising pay and improving conditions is a vital first step in this strategy, and needs to be followed by the accreditation of staff in the community sector. The AASW wholeheartedly supports the ASU in this campaign.”

Kandie Allen-Kelly, AASW CEO, said, “Australians who receive community services must be able to rely on the competence, capacity, integrity and professionalism of the staff, regardless of the nature of the service accessed. At present, the biggest barrier to achieving to assisting those individuals and families experiencing difficulties is the lack of a well-resourced and professionally trained workforce.”

The AASW calls on all Governments to play their part in:

- Ensuring a sustainable community sector by improving pay and conditions, which will assist in quality staff recruitment and retention;
- Lifting the skills and qualifications of the community sector workforce by introducing a national accreditation scheme for the community sector;
- Developing a national community sector workforce strategy to recruit and retain skilled people to deliver community services;
- Reviewing the funding and contracts for community services, to ensure sustainable services with minimal compliance costs;
- Specific measures to attract skilled staff to remote and rural Australia.