



Take a look at a bleak future under the Howard Government's IR changes

There are arguably two significant changes to federal and state industrial laws in the WorkChoices package – apart from the unfair dismissal changes – which will have the biggest impact on nurses.

First, changes to the 'no disadvantage test'. Currently there is a legal requirement that all nursing agreements (both collective and individual and union and non union) provide benefits which, taken as a whole, are not less than the relevant nursing award which would otherwise apply.

Under the Howard Government's industrial relations changes, agreements need only meet five minimum criteria which, for full time employees are; four weeks annual leave; 12 months unpaid parental leave (after 12 months employment); 10 days sick/ personal leave per year; and an ordinary hourly wage rate not less than the award. These five criteria will form the new 'no disadvantage test' for agreements.

Second, many changes will arise from the shift in responsibility for setting and maintaining wage levels, from the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and its state tribunal equivalents to the Australian Fair Pay Commission (AFPC).

The AFPC will be required to carry out its responsibilities in a manner far different from industrial tribunals. For example, unlike the primary considerations of fairness and the needs of the low paid which guide all industrial tribunals, the AFPC will be required to set and review wage levels having regard to 'the capacity of the unemployed and low paid to obtain and remain in employment'. Most observers agree this change in emphasis will mean fewer and lower wage

adjustments for employee's dependant on awards.

For the nursing profession the changes will mean that wages and conditions will become increasingly fragmented with, at one end of the scale, nurses covered by collective agreements negotiated by the ANF and at the other end nurses employed under AWAs with minimum conditions offered on a take it or leave it basis.

What these changes will mean

While it is difficult to estimate the magnitude of these changes into the future, it is possible to accurately work out the difference which would apply today between existing agreements and awards and the minimum standards that will be available under the Howard Government's IR changes.

The scenarios set out here are based on various roster and shift configurations and the assumptions used to calculate the differences are detailed in each example. In some examples the difference is provided weekly and annually.

We consider the scenarios chosen reflect typical employment patterns for nurses.

The current wage differences in all of the scenarios are significant and will increase as the gap between collective agreements and federal awards becomes wider. Under the Howard Government's IR changes there will be little if any scope to vary federal awards and therefore employees dependent on these awards will progressively lose out.

The widening gap will cause serious aberrations in the nursing labour market as nurses understandably move to nursing sectors where their skills and

qualifications are recognised and appropriately remunerated.

Unfortunately, under new IR laws it will be easier to cut labour costs and nursing will not be immune from these attacks.

Nurses must stick together and fight for fair wages and condi-

tions for all. We must not let employers use the Howard Government's IR changes to fragment and reduce nursing entitlements.

These scenarios and others, as they are developed, will be available on the ANF website (www.anf.org.au).

Scenario One – Registered nurse in NSW public sector

This compares the weekly difference for a registered nurse level 1 year 8 employed in an operating theatre in a rural base hospital in NSW. The comparison is based on the nurse working two afternoon shifts per week, two weekends per month, ten periods of call per month, eight recalls per month and a public holiday per month.

Per week	Award	AWA
Hourly rate	\$29.99	\$29.99
Per 38 hour week	\$1,139.60	\$1,139.62
Qualification allowance	\$15.91	\$0.00
LSL	\$28.36	\$17.47
Evening shift allowance	\$59.98	\$0.00
Weekend	\$149.95	\$0.00
Public holiday	\$23.06	\$0.00
On call allowance	\$69.84	\$0.00
Overtime for emergency recall	\$419.86	\$179.94
Total	\$1,906.56	\$1,337.03
Difference		-\$569.53

Scenario Two – Enrolled nurse in NT public sector

This scenario compares the weekly and annual differences for an enrolled nurse at the highest increment level employed in a public hospital in the Northern Territory. The shift penalties are based on the enrolled nurse working a week of afternoon shift, a week of night shift, two weeks of day shift, one public holiday and two weekends per four weeks.

Per week	Agreement	AWA
Hourly rate	\$21.57	\$16.47
Per 38 hour week	\$819.66	\$658.80
Qualification allowance	\$20.34	\$0.00
Total per 38 hour week	\$840.00	\$658.80
Superannuation	\$92.22	\$59.29
LSL	\$20.49	\$20.49
Evening shift allowance	\$30.73	\$0.00
Night shift allowance	\$46.10	\$0.00
Weekend	\$64.72	\$0.00
Public holiday	\$43.14	\$0.00
Total	\$1,137.40	\$738.58
Difference		-\$398.82

Scenario Two – continued:

Per year	Agreement	AWA
6 weeks annual leave	\$5,040.00	\$2,635.20
Leave loading	\$882.00	\$0.00
Additional leave	\$840.00	\$658.80
12 days ADOs	\$1,967.18	\$0.00
52 weeks less annual leave	\$50,045.69	\$34,713.35
Total	\$58,774.88	\$38,007.35
Sick leave	\$2,458.98	\$1,317.60
	\$61,233.86	\$39,324.95
Difference		-\$21,908.90

Scenario Three – Registered nurses in Victorian and Tasmanian public sector

In this scenario we provide the weekly and annual difference for nurses employed in public hospitals in Victoria and in Tasmania. In both cases the nurses are paid at the top increment of the base registered nurse classification structure. (Victoria RN Grade 2 and Tasmania RN Level 1) and the shift penalties assume a week of afternoon and nights, two weeks of day shift and working two weekends in the month.

VICTORIA

Per week	Agreement	AWA
Hourly rate	\$27.37	\$20.53
Per 38 hour week	\$1,040.06	\$821.20
Qualification allowance	\$52.00	\$0.00
Total per 38 hour week	\$1,092.06	\$821.20
Superannuation	\$120.13	\$73.91
LSL	\$34.00	\$17.00
Evening shift allowance	\$23.12	\$0.00
Night shift allowance	\$58.13	\$0.00
Weekend	\$54.74	\$0.00
Public holiday	\$54.74	\$0.00
Change of roster	\$5.78	\$0.00
Total	\$1,442.70	\$912.11
Difference		-\$530.59

Per year	Agreement	AWA
4 weeks annual leave	\$4,368.24	\$3,284.80
Leave loading	\$764.44	\$0.00
Additional leave	\$2,184.12	\$1,040.06
12 days ADOs	\$2,496.14	\$0.00
52 weeks less annual leave	\$66,364.25	\$42,869.08
Total	\$76,177.20	\$47,193.94
Sick leave	\$3,339.14	\$1,642.40
	\$79,516.34	\$48,836.34
Difference		-\$30,680.00

TASMANIA

Per week	Agreement	AWA
Hourly rate	\$27.18	\$20.53
Per 38 hour week	\$1,032.84	\$821.20
Qualification allowance	\$41.31	\$0.00
Total per 38 hour week	\$1,074.15	\$821.20

Scenario Three – continued:

Superannuation	\$117.52	\$73.91
LSL	\$34.00	\$17.00
Evening shift allowance	\$23.12	\$0.00
Night shift allowance	\$58.13	\$0.00
Weekend	\$54.74	\$0.00
Public holiday	\$54.36	\$0.00
Change of roster	\$5.78	\$0.00
Total	\$1,421.80	\$912.11
Difference		-\$509.69

Per year	Agreement	AWA
4 weeks annual leave	\$4,296.60	\$3,284.80
Leave loading	\$751.91	\$0.00
Additional leave	\$2,148.30	\$1,032.84
12 days ADOs	\$2,478.82	\$0.00
52 weeks less annual leave	\$65,402.93	\$42,869.08
Total	\$75,078.55	\$47,186.72
Sick leave	\$3,315.96	\$1,642.40
	\$78,394.51	\$48,829.12
Difference		-\$29,565.40

Scenario Four – Registered nurse in ACT private sector

This scenario provides the difference on a weekly and annual basis for a registered nurse level 1 (top increment) who works a week of afternoon and night shifts, two weeks day shift, a public holiday and two weekends per four weeks. The nurse receives a 3.5% qualification allowance for having a post graduate certificate.

Per week	Agreement	AWA
Hourly rate	\$29.12	\$20.88
Per 38 hour week	\$1,106.56	\$835.20
Qualification allowance	\$28.39	\$0.00
Total per 38 hour week	\$1,134.95	\$835.20
Superannuation	\$122.26	\$75.17
LSL	\$25.54	\$17.00
Evening shift allowance	\$34.58	\$0.00
Night shift allowance	\$62.24	\$0.00
Weekend	\$69.16	\$0.00
Public holiday	\$29.12	\$0.00
Total	\$1,477.85	\$927.37
Difference		-\$550.48

Per year	Agreement	AWA
6 weeks annual leave	\$6,809.70	\$3,340.80
Leave loading	\$1,191.70	\$0.00
Additional leave	\$1,134.95	\$1,106.56
12 days ADOs	\$2,655.74	\$0.00
52 weeks less annual leave	\$67,981.08	\$43,586.30
Total	\$79,773.17	\$48,033.66
Sick leave	\$3,319.68	\$1,670.40
	\$83,092.85	\$49,704.06
Difference		-\$33,388.80

Scenario Five – Registered nurse in South Australian private sector

In this scenario the registered nurse works a week of afternoon and nights, two weeks day shift, a public holiday and two weekends per four weeks.

Per week	Agreement	AWA
Hourly rate	\$28.69	28.69
Per 37.5 hour week	\$1,075.88	\$1,075.88
Superannuation	\$96.83	\$96.83
LSL	\$17.00	\$17.00
Afternoon shift allowance	\$26.92	\$0.00
Night shift allowance	\$36.60	\$0.00
Weekend	\$161.40	\$0.00
Public holiday	\$54.74	\$0.00
Total	\$1,469.36	\$1,189.70
Difference		-\$279.66

Per year	Agreement	AWA
4 weeks annual leave	\$5,877.46	\$4,303.50
Additional leave	\$2,938.73	\$1,075.88
Sick leave	\$3,227.63	\$2,151.75
11 public holidays	\$2,846.48	\$0.00
52 weeks less annual leave	\$67,590.73	\$55,916.08
Superannuation	\$7,158.81	\$4,589.68
Total	\$89,639.83	\$68,036.88
Difference		-\$21,602.94

Scenario Six – Assistant in nursing in Queensland private aged care facility

This comparison provides the weekly and annual difference for an Assistant in Nursing employed in a private aged care facility in Queensland. The AIN works five afternoons and five nights, seven ordinary week days, a public holiday day shift, a Saturday day shift and Sunday day shift per four weeks.

Per week	Agreement	AWA
Hourly rate	\$15.94	\$14.15
Per 38 hour week	\$605.58	\$537.70
Qualification allowance	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total per week	\$605.58	\$566.00
Superannuation	\$55.03	\$50.94
LSL	\$11.61	\$8.93
Evening shift allowance	\$18.92	\$16.803125
Night shift allowance	\$22.71	\$20.16
Weekend	\$151.39	\$0.00
Public holiday	\$60.56	\$161.31
Uniform allowance	\$3.99	\$2.70
Laundry allowance	\$1.85	\$1.65
Total	\$925.79	\$824.15
Difference		-\$101.65

Per year	Agreement	AWA
4 weeks annual leave	\$2,422.30	\$2,264.00
Leave loading	\$635.85	\$396.20
Additional leave	\$1,211.15	\$0.00
52 weeks less annual leave	\$42,586.49	\$38,734.97
Total	\$46,855.80	\$41,395.17
Sick leave	\$1,211.15	\$1,075.40
	\$48,066.95	\$42,470.57
Difference		-\$5,596.38



Photo: Marcelle Mogg



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