

2023 LHN CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

MEMBER UPDATE No. 2, 10 May 2023

2023 LHN CONTRACT CLAIM LODGED

Welcome to the second edition of *2023 Member Update*.

Please find our now lodged 2023 Contract Claim **ATTACHED** with this email. There has been extensive Member consultation to develop its content.

On 8 May 2023, we spent three hours establishing agreement as to how RSS/LHNs and ourselves will work to develop trust, collaborate and problem solve for eventual agreement (i.e., negotiation process management) AND, we thoroughly explain the merit and meaning behind each of our claim items. Our fundamental messages are:

- The sustainability of general practice as a business is inexorably linked to the sustainability of public services. This requires RSS/LHN to not take a narrow view about solving the difficulties our claims highlight.
- GPs regard the lack of LHN engagement with them and the lack of consistent treatment (contract implementation etc.) means there is a lack of respect shown to GPs that must be remediated (via behaviour change and helpful, tangible outcomes).
- Over the life of a new agreement, LHNs must have measurement, systems and feedback loops designed to demonstrate achievement of agreed: milestones, operationalisation & success of outcomes and agreement implementation/compliance.

There has been several correspondence exchanges, and a two-hour 30 March meeting (reported in Update 1) working up to our 8 May meeting (we also provided our written claim to them three weeks in advance). These steps have us in the position of RSS/LHNs agreeing to try to work 'hand in hand' with us to create a new deal.

Potentially not all outcomes will be delivered via contract but instead via other 'fit for purpose' mechanisms. This is because workforce sustainability and trainee support, as examples, need broad, funded, responses.

We have finished the 8 May meeting with expectation that RSS/LHNs will have completed, for its next meet with us, a great deal of work so that there is a solid foundation to our problem-solving effort. We have asked, and we believe they have agreed, to:

- Give comprehensive expression as to how the Government's *Rural Medical Workforce Plan 2019-2024* and *Rural Think Tank Reports (December 2022)* have practical relationship to our claims and offer solutions to rural GP sustainability. We analysed these documents and have given our views to RSS/LHNs.
- Avoid 'dicking around' by delivering in principle agreement or immediate action on a number of our claim that, from or 8 May meeting, appear resolvable without much fuss.
- Provide technical or legal evidence that demonstrates certain funding or claim objectives are constrained (so we can then find 'work arounds' together).
- Provide comprehensive response to all of our claim items and begin drafting what would eventually become a joint, without prejudice, confidential list of: A) what is not working; B) what is working but is unsustainable; and C) what is working well. This so that we have a broad base line to work on systemic agreed outcomes that may extend beyond simple contract terms.

To enable RSS/LHNs to do this work, and due to several persons being on leave at the same time, the next contract negotiation meeting will occur mid-July. A third Update will report outcomes then.

You are encouraged to **remain engaged** as this process evolves so that we can:

- harness the collective strength of rural GPs if we need to press hard for important outcomes;
- AND
- to ensure you, your patients' and your communities' interests are well served by the eventual outcome.

Distributing this *Update* to your non-member colleagues is useful, as is your suggestion that they join RDASA and/or AMA(SA).

Your Member Associations are, once again, doing the work and resourcing the process. Remember, without their leadership you would not have the average 21 percent salary increase cumulative over two years delivered by the current contract.

If you are not a member, please consider joining, by visiting the [RDASA](#) and [AMA\(SA\)](#) websites.

To provide comment or feedback, or for more information, please contact:

- RDASA: President: Dr Peter Rischbieth (Peter.Rischbieth@bridgeclinic.com.au) or Treasurer: Dr Scott Lewis (scott@wudinamedical.com.au)



- AMA(SA): President: Dr John Williams (icwilliams1967@mac.com or president@amasa.org.au) or Chief Executive Officer: Dr Samantha Mead (CEO@amasa.org.au).

We look forward to providing further information and hearing your voices.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J Williams', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Dr John Williams
President AMA(SA)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P Rischbieth', written in a cursive style.

Dr Peter Rischbieth
President RDASA