

Feedback from a New Graduate Health Professional

As a recent graduate entering the healthcare workforce, I support the proposed reforms to ban non-compete clauses and other employment restraints for low- and middle-income workers.

In my experience, many business owners take advantage of new graduates. It is common to be offered CHAMs contracts (subcontractor arrangements) that avoid paying superannuation. Some clinics simply don't pay super at all. There is very little oversight or enforcement in these cases, and new graduates often feel powerless to speak up.

Non-compete clauses only add to this imbalance. They create fear and insecurity. I've stayed in workplaces longer than I should have — not because I wanted to, but because I was afraid the clinic owner could sue me. This is not a healthy or fair way to start a career.

In job interviews, I've been rejected simply for asking how much I would be paid or whether superannuation was included. I've also been expected to attend compulsory unpaid meetings, which I consider exploitative — yet it seems to be standard practice.

Recently, I saw a job advertisement for a healthcare graduate position offering a lower hourly rate than cleaning work. This is not an industry issue — it's a power imbalance that the current laws allow.

For these reasons, I believe the reforms would:

- Protect new graduates from being exploited
- Improve transparency in pay and work conditions
- Give workers freedom to move to workplaces that treat them fairly
- Encourage ethical business practices across the industry

I'm supportive of banning non-compete clauses, no-poach agreements, and wage-fixing practices for low- and middle-income workers. These changes are a step in the right direction.