

12 September 2017

Special Constables – Work Health and Safety Update

Last week, Special Constables Advisory Group delegates, along with PSA staff, met with SMU management to discuss a number of work health and safety (WHS) issues members had raised with us.

The meeting was reasonably productive and resulted in some agreement, although other matters will require ongoing consultation and negotiation.

1. Weapons training

Management advised that every Special Constable who is not on restricted duties or long term leave is expected to have completed Active Armed Offender training by 1 December 2017. They agreed they did not ever want such a lapse in training to occur again. The PSA will work towards a written commitment to have training for Special Constables implemented exactly in line with that of Police Officers as it appears in their award. The log of claims put together for Special Constables Award bargaining by members also contains a claim for mandatory weapons training to be included in the award.

2. X-Ray machine training

Management indicated that no one had raised any concerns about X-Ray machine training. Special Constables Advisory Group delegates indicated that in previous years, there had been a yearly training package with laptops and software to maintain and update skills, but that this had been discontinued due to costs.

It was agreed that delegates would research a number of options to present to management to improve the training situation in this area.

3. Provision of lockers

It was agreed by all sides that every Special Constable should have access to a secure locker in order to store lightweight body armour and other parts of the uniform. Management indicated that an audit of locker access to date had only yielded two examples of staff without lockers. Whilst PSA delegates have been pushing for lockers to be included in the new award, management indicated that it would immediately provide lockers to any staff member without proper access to one regardless. The PSA also raised the issue of staff not having access to lockers when rotating at different sites. Management indicated it was not aware of this but were committed to addressing any issues raised by members.

Any Special Constable without access to a locker should immediately contact their Supervisor. Contact a PSA delegate if the situation is not rectified.

4. Overwatch

It is the current position of PSA staff and delegates that no Special Constable should ever be 'one-out', including to cover the front of the buildings while colleagues go on patrol. Given the current risk and security environment, we maintain that there should always be a minimum of two people



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positioned outside. The PSA noted the industrial dispute Police Officer colleagues and their union ran in the last couple of years arguing for the discontinuation of 'Single Unit Policing'. After a teleconference last month, management agreed to conduct a Risk Assessment at the insistence of the PSA, which they have now completed. They state that based that assessment, they intend to return to the previous practice and that no significant safety concerns were raised through the consultation process that would warrant adjusting their position.

Furthermore, as the Risk Assessment has strong security and privacy issues, they did not intend to release it to the PSA for review. Management agreed to explore getting a version to us for review without breaching security protocol and as discussions continue, no work practice change will be implemented that involves Special Constables being 'one-out'.

Lastly, the wearing of beanies for all employees of NSW Police, including Police Officers, is determined by the Uniform Standards Committee and currently only issued in cold weather climates. However, management is working on formalising a rotation system which would ensure staff never stood outside for long periods of time without relief.

Management reiterated its commitment to working with staff, as well as the PSA, to address issues of concern. They also stated their preference for Special Constables to first raise concerns through the chain of command, starting with the

appropriate supervisor. The PSA broadly supports this position, however stressed that there were times the union would directly intervene on behalf of members, particularly around WHS issues or where members felt uncomfortable raising matters with supervisors.

A bulletin updating members on the award bargaining process will be sent out this month. Also, the first meeting of the newly formed Special Constables Advisory Group will take place in October, followed the next day by a meeting of delegates, PSA staff, and management, called the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC). It is intended that the Advisory Group meetings and the JCC will both then take place every three months.

If you would like to organise a PSA visit to your site, or for any feedback/concerns, please contact:

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What can you do?

- » Not a member? Get involved by signing up!
- » Give a copy of this bulletin to your colleagues.
- » Print this bulletin and put it up on your notice board.
- » Ask a colleague to join the PSA.
- » Get involved by becoming a local union delegate or contact.

