

Frequently Asked Questions – Stop Work on October 8, 2012

(1) Why is the PSA calling a stop work meeting?

The PSA has called a 'stop work' meeting for the 8 October for those members covered by state awards. The meeting is to inform members about the cuts proposed by the O'Farrell Government to the main award that sets the conditions of employment, directly and indirectly, for most public sector workers. These changes are just the latest in a long line of attacks on the wages and conditions of public sector workers. Enough is enough! PSA members need to demonstrate to the Government that we intend to fight to defend public sector wages conditions and jobs. This is a first step in a continuing campaign against the Government's attacks on the public sector.

(2) What does 'stop work' mean?

A 'stop work' is a short strike. It is generally called to enable union members to hear reports on industrial issues and to demonstrate that they are willing to fight for an issue.

(3) Will I get paid?

No, a 'stop work' is a form of industrial action so you will not get paid for the time you are participating in the stop work. .

(4) Can I be victimised by my manager for stopping work?

No you cannot be victimised for participating in industrial action. You are protected by the Industrial Relations Act 1996 and Clause 64 of the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2009 "protects the right of Association members to take lawful industrial action."

(5) How do I record the absence on my time sheet?

The stop work is industrial action so it should be recorded as 'unauthorised leave'. Some payroll systems will not have a capacity to record this type of leave so your agency may require you to complete a paper based leave form.

(6) Should I tell my boss I am taking part in the industrial action?

Yes, you need to advise your employer you will be following the directive from the PSA to stop work. Your boss cannot prevent you from taking industrial action.

(7) What is the point of the stop work?

The stop work is being held so members can be informed about the proposals being put forward by the Government and to collectively register our protest at what is being proposed.

(8) What happens after October 8th?

October 8 is a step in our campaign to resist the attacks by this Government. Proposals for further action, as part of an ongoing campaign, will be considered at the stop work meetings being held across the state.

(9) Why are we striking now?

The PSA is taking industrial action now to demonstrate to the Government that we intend to fight its proposed cuts to conditions and to try and make them think twice about carrying through with its proposals.

(10) What can I do to make this strike effective?

Talk to your work colleagues, both union members and non members, about how we need to work together if we are going to defeat these proposals. Encourage all your work

colleagues to come to the rally or local stop work meeting. Talk to non members in your workplace about joining the PSA.

(11) What's the point of me going on strike if others in the office are at work

The point of the strike is to register your protest at what the Government is trying to do and not necessarily to disrupt the operations of your agency. If you think you are going to be alone in taking industrial action call a meeting in your workplace to try and convince others to take the action with you.

(12) Won't this be dealt with in the Industrial Relations Commission?

The Government has made an application in the Industrial Relations Commission to cut your conditions of employment. The PSA will be mounting a strong challenge in the Commission to prevent this happening. The PSA has also lead the way in taking the Government's restrictive Industrial Relations laws to the High Court.

These proposals are all about savings for the Government. Unless we fight them with all the tools we have at our disposal – legal, industrial and political - then the Government will try and achieve its agenda by other means.

(13) Can't the government try to use legislation to force the changes anyway?

Yes that is always a possibility but if our campaigning is effective then they will be reluctant to try. A strong campaign will also sway the cross bench MPs in the upper house who the Government need to get their legislation through.

(14) Why is only PSA taking industrial action?

These proposals pose an immediate threat to the conditions of PSA members covered by state awards. The industrial action is a means to help members understand the issues and how important it is for them to take action. Both Unions NSW and other public sector unions are supporting the PSA in taking action. They understand that if the Government can get away with its proposal in relation to PSA members then they will try the same thing with their members.