



Community Services BULLETIN

30 August 2013

PSA Members Bulletin - Community Services Walkouts

At lunchtime on 20 August, members in approximately 30 Community Service Centres (CSCs) across the state rallied outside their offices to highlight severe staffing shortages.

The action was the culmination of a process that began at Coniston CSC in August 2012 and was followed at 18 other locations. By participating in this action, members made a very clear statement that they want the long standing problems fixed and all positions filled.

Last Tuesday's walkouts however were simultaneous and the PSA was able to alert the media the day prior, meaning there was extensive media coverage achieving what no amount of meetings and letters could.

On Thursday following the walkouts, Anne Gardiner, PSA General Secretary and Steve Turner, PSA Assistant General Secretary along with delegates from Community Services Departmental Committee met with FACS Director General Mr Michael Coutts-Trotter, Ms Maree Walk, Chief Executive, and Ms Deidre Mulkerin, Deputy Chief Executive, Operations.

Discussions took place in relation to the following issues faced by Community Services staff:

- 1) Vacancies, frontline and non-frontline;
- 2) Long term temps, and staff secondments;
- 3) Fixing computer systems and reducing red tape;
- 4) Schoolzin – new truancy pilot program;
- 5) Docking staff for the lunchtime walkout.

The meeting was productive with the Director General stating that he considered DOCS staff to be the "best at what they do" and that members were both professional and dedicated.

The meeting was positive with the Director General giving an undertaking to:

- Fill all frontline vacancies and review all long term temp positions stating the department needed to adopt a long term view of recruitment and retention, and acknowledge the value of secondments to the organisation and to staff's professional development as well as the missed higher duties opportunities to develop tomorrows managers;
- In the short term, try and fix the current KiDS System. In the medium term to long term look at the options replacing the KiDS System with a more user friendlier one;
- Review the Schoolzin pilot at 33 sites, in relation to returning decision making on prioritisation and allocation to local management in the Weekly Allocation Meeting (WAM).

- Lastly, the PSA informed the Director General that PSA members involved in the walkout have been informed they will be docked one hours pay. PSA stated that as members took part in this action during their lunch break, they should not lose any pay. We will keep you updated on this issue. Do advise local delegates or the PSA if your pay is docked.

As far as members being docked for the industrial action, the PSA indicated that as the walkout took place at lunchtime and thus in staff's own time there was no grounds to treat the walkout as a stop work.

In finishing,

- 1) I have been acting Industrial officer in this portfolio for approximately 7 weeks and I am privileged to work with such dedicated people. Particularly those who are so willing to follow their convictions.
- 2) Mr Coutts-Trotter was adamant that he considers CS staff the "best at what they do" stating staff at CS are both professional and dedicated.
- 3) Most importantly, last Tuesday's action was a resounding success because each of you, as PSA members were committed to making it work.

Before we shelve any further walkouts though we need to see clear evidence that what we have asked of Mr Coutts-Trotter and the Department is progressing. Then, as an act of good faith we will negotiate.

Congratulations to each of you who participated or supported those who participated in last Tuesday's action. YOU are the power of the PSA.