



DEC's 'Oliver' Twist

SAS staff alerted the PSA that the Department has awarded a major IT contract to independent software company Softlink.

Softlink currently supplies some schools with Library management software known as 'Oliver'.

This major DEC contract awards Softlink a \$10.5 million, six year contract which will rollout 'Oliver' across all schools in NSW.

Industry sources are starting to report on the DEC 'Oliver' contract. You can read more:

http://www.itnews.com.au/News/390180_nsw-schools-prepare-for-10m-oasis-library-overhaul.aspx

These reports indicate the Department undertook a comprehensive tendering process but neglected to consult with the PSA, a major stakeholder, prior to awarding the contract.

The PSA considers this complete lack of consultation to be a breach of the NSW Government's obligations.

Members may recall the PSA had a recent win in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission (NSWIRC) to have consultation with the PSA enshrined in Award about decisions which will impact on the work of SAS staff.

If the 'Oliver' contract is any indication, the DEC appears to have no regard for decisions made by the NSWIRC.

As soon as members made the PSA aware of the intended rollout of 'Oliver' to all schools, the PSA contacted the Department and to initiate consultation.

The PSA seeks to reach agreement with the DEC on an implementation plan for the rollout of 'Oliver'.

The DEC and the PSA will meet as a matter of urgency to negotiate implementation issues, including the provision of appropriate training for SAS staff during the implementation phase.

Throughout this process, the PSA will be seeking member input and feedback.

It is disappointing the Department failed to involve the PSA in the lead up to the 'Oliver' project. It seems the DEC has failed to learn any lessons from the messy rollout of other IT systems such as ERN, and more recently LMBR.

The PSA continues to participate on the LMBR taskforce. PSA involvement is resulting in gradual improvements in the rollout and ensuring appropriate support is provided to SAS staff in the 229 LMBR focus schools. LMBR is slowly getting better, but there is still a way to go.

The PSA acknowledges jobs evolve for a wide variety of reasons and will work with the Department to ensure new technology is implemented in a proper manner that minimises any negative impact on SAS staff.

The PSA's longstanding position is that proper consultation when initiating technological change, like 'Oliver', helps in delivering a smooth transition to the implementation of new computer systems aimed at improving work practices in schools.

Members will be kept informed on the implementation of the 'Oliver' rollout through bulletins.