



RE: Workers' Compensation Campaign

19 September 2014

There has been considerable media interest in the issue of Prison Officers workers' compensation.

The PSA was successful in the strategy very early into the piece to buy into media and social concern over inmate numbers. We managed to get considerable media coverage, including the front page of the Telegraph on one occasion, by highlighting the link between increasing inmate numbers and staff safety. We have also done some rural television news interviews; countless radio interviews on both country and city radio and had good coverage in many rural newspapers.

The PSA has written to both the Treasurer and to the Minister to formally request an exemption for Correctional Officers to some of the changes brought about by the Workers Compensation Amendment Act 2012.

The issue of a media campaign was raised at the last POVB Consultative meeting. Various views existed, with some delegates expressing the view that we should not be wasting our time on a campaign, that workers compensation was an important and urgent issue and that we should be taking industrial action. It was finally resolved by all delegates that a combination of both approaches would work best.

The PSA have continued to push for all possible media interviews on the issue of workers' compensation and worked hard to build as many networks as possible.

The PSA is currently in negotiation with the Government over workers' compensation. While negotiation is slow, it is going well at this point. The Minister (Mr Hazard) has stated he is sympathetic to our cause and has expressed a desire to negotiate in good faith. Several meetings have taken place and the Minister has supported members on a number of other key issues, including non-smoking policies and a National Medal. Mr Hazard has agreed to support the introduction of a special National Medal for Corrective Services. This will go a long way to improving the public image of correctional officers and publicising the work done. The medal presentation ceremony would likely be an event that would attract positive media coverage, particularly in rural areas.

In light of the fact that negotiations are still underway with the Government, the PSA believes the best strategy at this point is to await an outcome prior to undertaking any further actions. Any negative political lobbying at this point could potentially damage an outcome that can be negotiated.

However, if negotiations are not successful, lobbying will be the next step. We are presently revising a strategy that includes media and political lobbying. This will coincide with the NSW state elections in 2015. Some of the background has already been completed, including draft campaign logo design.