

Safety Return to Work Support newsletter

Parliamentary Inquiry

Since our last bulletin in September, work continues following on from the Parliamentary Inquiry into bullying in WorkCover. The Parliamentary committee announced its review into the implementation of their earlier recommendations made in the report released in June 2014. The PSA made both written and verbal submissions to the Review, appearing before the parliamentary committee on 28 October 2014. The committee's report on the review was released on 11 December and is available on the parliamentary website. See the link below:

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/F3F09E60C3B3456ECA257DAB0003F9DC?open&refnavid=x>

The committee has made 3 recommendations as a result of the review which basically require Safety Return to Work Support to liaise more closely with the PSA. This is a good outcome for us.

The process of more detailed consultation has commenced and a number of meetings on various issues have occurred. A Joint Bullying Working Group has been re-established to discuss issues directly arising from the Inquiry process. The first of these meetings was held on 11 December 2014 and some productive discussion was had but there is still a long way to go. The PSA has so far focussed attention on addressing the short-comings of the new bullying policy; specifically the total lack of any preventative measures. Intensive work will continue on this issue in the new year.

SRWS JCC

A Joint Consultative Committee meeting was held on 4 December 2014, the first meeting since July. Many issues were discussed but it was good to have the opportunity to engage with the new CEO directly. During this meeting he indicated his preparedness to communicate with our members who have left WorkCover and who seek closure on bullying issues they experienced or witnessed prior to their departure. This follows on from the Inquiry recommendation that WorkCover apologise to employees past and present.

A commitment was given to meet to discuss the reciprocal memorandum of Understanding with DTIRIS in relation to investigations of safety matters with the regulator itself. This meeting has been scheduled for 13 January 2015.

SRWS intends to review all temporary positions in

the organisation in relation to the most recent changes to the GSE rules. It is hoped that some of our members will benefit from this review with more secure employment.

The Workers Compensation Commission will be calling for EOI for VR as a result of a restructuring process while the Workers Compensation Insurance Division continues work to separate the function of insurance from that of regulation. Regular updates are being provided to staff on these issues.

CBDS office relocation

The CBD South office has now relocated to Bella Vista. A working party was put together to manage issues related to this move. The PSA had 2 member reps on this group who worked hard to ensure a smooth transition for all concerned. The PSA wrote separately to the Office of Finance and Services raising industrial issues related to this move. We are still awaiting a response from OFS management who claim to have sent a response. However, they have so far been unable to locate it to forward to the PSA.

Inspectors MOU

The interim MOU which was agreed last year as a result of the restructuring process, has now been extended till 31 March 2015. This was considered necessary due to delays experienced in recruiting to a number of roles and therefore the trial of the new arrangements has not yet been comprehensive. Nonetheless, discussions commenced on 4 December 2014 on the implementation issues so far experienced as a result of the interim changes to the MOU. Members are encouraged to notify the PSA of issues they have experienced to date so that we can discuss these issues with WorkCover and inform any views about whether the changes to the MOU should be made permanent. No permanent change will be made to the MOU without going to a vote of the members. Please raise any concerns or make your views known to your VG reps.

Merry Christmas

Lastly, it has been a very big year in SRWS. The PSA would like to thank all your hard-working delegates who put themselves forward regularly to deal with complex and difficult issues, often in an adversarial environment. We also wish to thank all our members who have contributed to resolving collective matters and for your ongoing support.

There is much more work to be done in the new year.

See you all in 2015.

