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14 October 2015

SAS staff update - Valuing the work of School Administrative Support Staff

The PSA believes that the work of SAS staff in schools has not been properly valued by the Department.

That is why the PSA General Secretary, Anne Gardiner, instructed solicitors to assess whether we could build a pay equity case for SAS Staff.

Upon receiving advice that there is merit in pursuing such a case, the General Secretary directed PSA staff to work with delegates to gather the evidence needed. This is a long and detailed process which continues. Last term, the PSA invited members to make submissions to the PSA on how the work you do now differs from your position description. Members are encouraged to make such a submission to the PSA using this [template](#).

(<http://psa.asn.au/pay-equity-equal-remuneration-campaign-for-sas-staff/>)

The PSA is meeting again with solicitors on Thursday 14 October to determine the next steps required in the progress of this matter. We will keep you updated.

Enhanced Role of the SAM & Business Managers

The PSA is now in dispute with the Department of Education over a decision to introduce Business Managers into all schools.

Since 2012, the PSA has been fighting to ensure that the introduction of Business Managers is done in a way which:

- enhances the career for SAS staff
- alleviates workload for SAS staff
- is transparent and accountable
- is not at the expense of SAS staff.

In 2010, the Department established the position of Business Manager. At that time, the PSA was consulted on the development and grading of the associated position descriptions. This resulted in two position descriptions, one graded at clerk grade 5/6 and, the other graded at clerk grade 7/8.

The employment conditions are provided for under the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award and the salaries are provided for under the Crown Employees (Administrative and Clerical Officers Crown Employees) - Salaries Award.

The Business Manager position was first rolled out in the 47 pilot schools and in 2012 in the 229 LMBR focus schools. In 2012, when the Department advised that it would introduce the position into the 229 schools, the PSA sought that the Department instead “enhance” the roll of School Administrative Managers. This was not accepted.

Then, to guard against our concern that Business Managers would be funded at the expense of SAS staff, thereby reducing transfer opportunities for SAS staff, the PSA also sought, and won, redundancy rights for SAS staff.

Since that time, senior PSA industrial staff have carefully considered the following industrial problems for SAS staff:

1. Excessive workload (made even worse in the 229 schools where LMBR is creating problems)
2. Clarification of & fair pay for the work expected to be undertaken by SAS staff
3. Salary that appropriately accounts for the work currently undertaken by SAMs outside of their statement of duties

4. Real opportunities for career enhancement for SAS Staff.

In considering the above, it was found that the best approach is the following industrial combination:

- The pay equity case
- Regulating the role & employment of Business Managers
- Seeking a smooth and coherent progression in position descriptions and salary scales between the various SASS roles including the Business Manager position.

The PSA has sought assurance that the employment of Business Managers will not be at the expense of School Administrative and Support Staff. In response, the Department advised that a NON 229 school may fund the employment of a Business Manager from within its available budget which is independent from the SASS staffing process which remains centralised at all non 229 schools.

In the 229 schools, where Principals may vary the staffing mix upon vacancy, a document entitled Principles for Determining the mix of staff in schools requires that “School Administrative Manager positions are to be retained.” This document is

to be read in conjunction with the consultation clause in the SAS Staff Award. Members will recall that this consultation clause was a result of PSA members fighting to have their views respected by the Department.

What will the PSA do now?

While there is no legislative or award provision prohibiting the Department from introducing this new role in schools, the PSA can and will fight to represent members’ interests as described above.

That is why the PSA notified a dispute with the Department stating our view that the consultation process in relation to the introduction of Business Managers has not been exhausted. As a result, the Department has agreed to meet with us about our outstanding issues. They will also halt notifying schools of the introduction of this classification of staff pending our meeting. The PSA and the Department are meeting on Thursday 15 October at 10.30am.

The PSA is also seeking legal advice on how to protect and advance the interests of our members in this circumstance.

If you would like to meet with the PSA about this issue please email us at schools@psa.asn.au

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