



24 February 2017

Juvenile Justice Increase in staff assaults

Following the recent assaults at Cobham and Orana Juvenile Justice centres, the PSA lodged a dispute in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission (IRC).

We stated in our dispute that on Tuesday 14 February 2017 two Youth Officers were physically injured at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre due to the behaviour of a young offender. One member was hospitalised.

The members within Juvenile Justice do not accept the Department's position that incidents are declining. We believe that the injuries and the violence as used by these young offenders have actually increased.

In October 2016 there was an incident at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre which involved several young offenders which left one female officer injured. To this day she remains off work with the likelihood that she will never return to duty due to the violent assault.

In January 2017 an Officer from the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre was injured on duty during an interaction with young offenders also resulting in hospitalisation and a lengthy recovery period.

Due to the levels of violence used by these young offenders, members on every shift are fearful of the volatility of their behaviours, which we have seen have no reason other than to injure staff.

The PSA has met with all levels of management within the Department in trying to address these challenging young offenders, as we no longer believe that their behaviours can be managed safely within the current centres infrastructure and the Detainee Risk Management Program (DRMP).

There is an urgent need to have these young offenders removed from the general population at both Cobham and Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice centres and placed into a unit which is solely designed to both manage and rehabilitate their behaviours.

The Department has a duty of care to both staff and young offenders in providing a safe and secure environment and we believe the current structure and practices of managing these young offenders' places staff and the detainees in great jeopardy.

The dispute was heard before Commissioner Tabbaa on the 21 February

2017. During the proceeding, the PSA stated the current infrastructure is inadequate, the detainee classification system is no longer able to manage these young offenders and that these detainees cannot be managed by way of current policies.

The PSA further stated to Commissioner Tabbaa that the Department under the Work Health and Safety Act has a duty of care to both the physical and psychological wellbeing of both staff and detainees.

Commissioner Tabbaa stated to the Department that one assault on staff and or one assault on a detainee is one assault too many and that they have an obligation to both staff and detainees in keeping them safe.

Commissioner Tabbaa has now scheduled a series of private conferences under the Collaborative Employment Framework which is to commence on 1 March 2017.

As stated by Commissioner Tabbaa, the purpose of the conferences is to look at solutions where everyone is working together to keep everyone safe.

We will work through one centre at a time where delegates will join Commissioner Tabbaa along with various staff from Juvenile Justice, the PSA and Safe Work.

Commissioner Tabbaa further stated that staff are entitled to come to work happy and be safe and together we must find solutions in addressing this issue.

I would encourage you to speak with your local workplace delegates (as listed below) or contact your Organiser Gino Di Candilo or Senior Industrial Officer Julie Bond at the PSA to ensure that your voice is heard.

- Bob King, Orana JJC
- Gary Hall and Jeff Britt, Frank Baxter JJC
- Shane Wright and Ian Lambert, Cobham JJC
- Suzanne Evans and Tammy Elwin, Riverina JJC
- Jo-Anne Katon and Jeannette Clark, Acmena JJC
- Sandra Diwa, Reiby JJC
- Martin Robinson, Custody Unit

