



27 July 2017

## Fisheries Officers **bulletin**

### Remote/Isolated work bulletin

The PSA wrote to Simon Smith, Secretary of the Department of Industry on 23 June 2017 regarding radio communications for Fisheries Officers. In particular, we raised our concerns for the welfare of members who do not have access to high-quality radio equipment and to the wide-ranging benefits of the Government Radio Network (GRN).

Many Fisheries Officers throughout the state have only been provided with mobile phones, which do not meet the benefits of the GRN, such as instantaneous transmissions, simultaneous messages between multiple officers, linked radios to relay messages from 'black spots' and the ability to communicate securely over vast distances.

In light of the dangers potentially faced by our members, we see this as a serious work health and safety issue.

The PSA received a reply from Mr Smith advising the department it is compliant with the Work Health & Safety Act 2011 as it:

- has a functional Safety Management System (SMS) that requires operations to identify hazards, assess risk and implement reasonably practicable controls to manage that risk
- deploys a number of controls for managing remote and isolated workers, taking into consideration such issues as duration of absence and cellular mobile coverage, among others.

**A number of PSA members have reported problems that do not appear to be adequately addressed by those controls. This includes poor reception in some areas and black spots. The PSA has not been provided with the controls.**

Management further advised it is undertaking a review of all DPI processes and resources for the management of remote and isolated workers.

**The PSA and its members should be consulted as a part of this review.**

Management has offered to meet with the PSA to discuss these matters and that meeting will be held shortly.

Whilst the PSA hopes to achieve a long term resolution to this matter, we remain concerned about the interim period. With that in mind, we remind our members that section 84 of the Work Health & Safety Act 2011 states:

#### *Right of worker to cease unsafe work*

*A worker may cease, or refuse to carry out, work if the worker has a reasonable concern that to carry out the work would expose the worker to a serious risk to the worker's health or safety, emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard*

Section 86 of the Act advises that the employee who ceases work must, as soon as practicable, advise their employer they have done so. They must remain available to carry out suitable alternative work.

Section 48 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation advises in regard to remote or isolated work that:

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- 1) *A person conducting a business or undertaking must manage risks to the health and safety of a worker associated with remote or isolated work, in accordance with Part 3.1.*
  - 2) *In minimising risks to the health and safety of a worker associated with remote or isolated work, a person conducting a business or undertaking must provide a system of work that includes effective communication with the worker.*

It further advises of the following penalties:

- 1) *In the case of an individual — \$6,000.*
- 2) *In the case of a body corporate — \$30,000.*

You should further note that Section 12F of the Act provides that strict liability applies to each physical element of each offence under the Act, unless otherwise stated.

There is nothing more important than your health.

With that in mind, we further advise members:

- to adhere to all reasonable safety directions from management
- to log all incidents and near incidents that impact on your own or a colleague's safety
- to not go into any situation where there is a serious risk to your health and safety
- complete a risk analysis prior to all occasions where you are going into the field

Complete our WHS Security Survey found [HERE](#).

([www.surveymonkey.com/r/FisheriesOfficersSCS](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FisheriesOfficersSCS))

The survey will close on **11 August 2017**.

You will also find links to the correspondence between the PSA and the Department [HERE](#).

If you have any queries you can contact the PSA on **1300 772 679** and speak to staff in our WHS section or Nick Player, Industrial Officer. Further you can contact your delegates who are listed below.

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